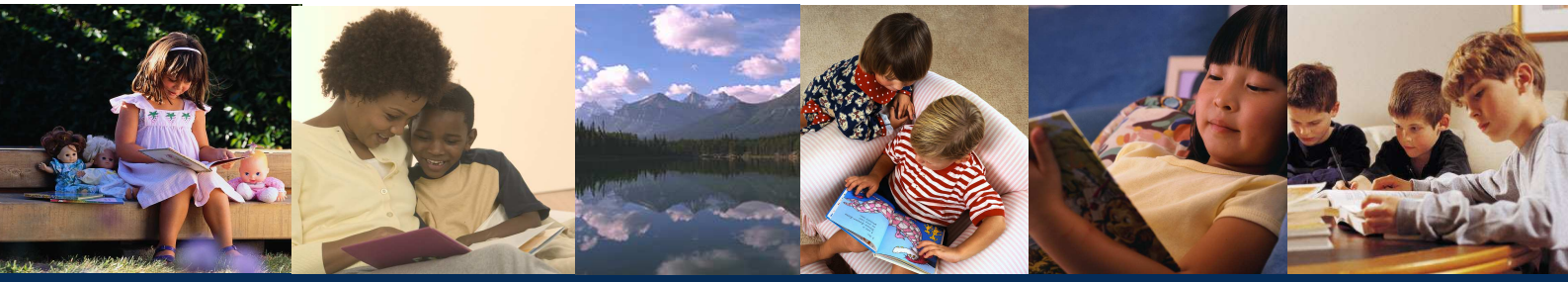
MONTANA READING FIRST
Final Evaluation Report



October 2009

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CREATING STRONG SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

MONTANA READING FIRST

Final Evaluation Report

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October 2009

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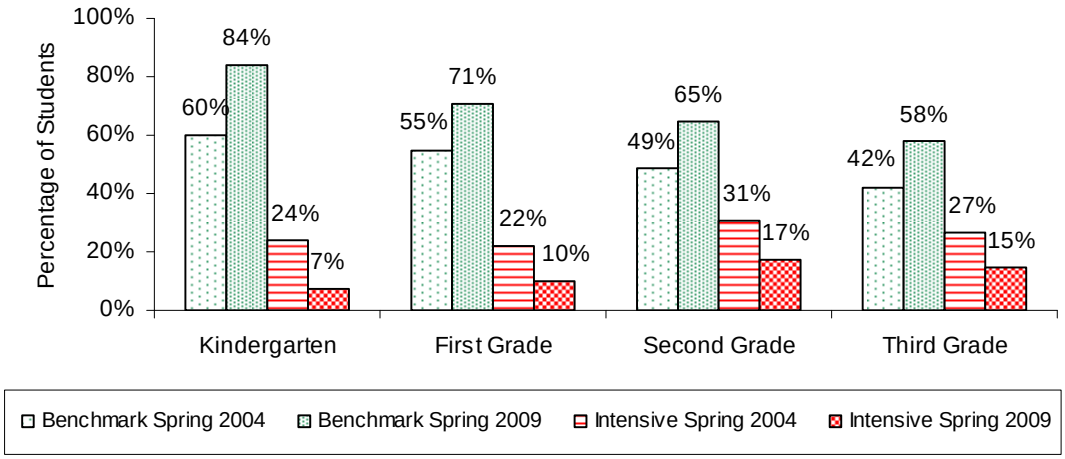
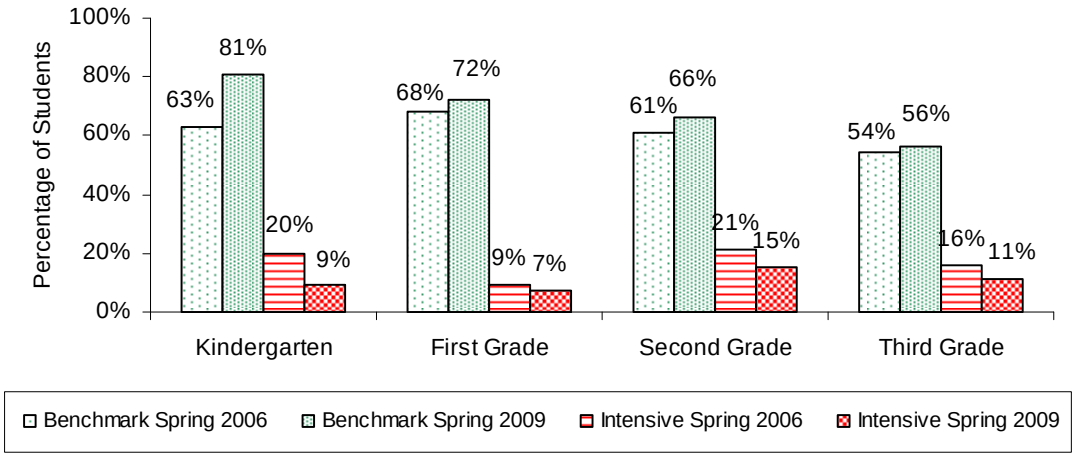
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Montana Reading First was successfully implemented in at least 30 schools between January 2004 and June 2009 and touched the lives of over 11,500 students. The majority of the schools received Reading First funding for at least four years. During this time substantial progress was made in increasing the percentages of students reading at benchmark and reducing the number of struggling readers. In both cohorts, from their first year of implementation through the last year of funding, the percentage of students reading at benchmark on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) increased at all grade levels, and the percentage of students at intensive on the DIBELS decreased at all grade levels.

Cohort 1
Percentage of Students at Benchmark and Intensive, Spring 2004 and Spring 2009

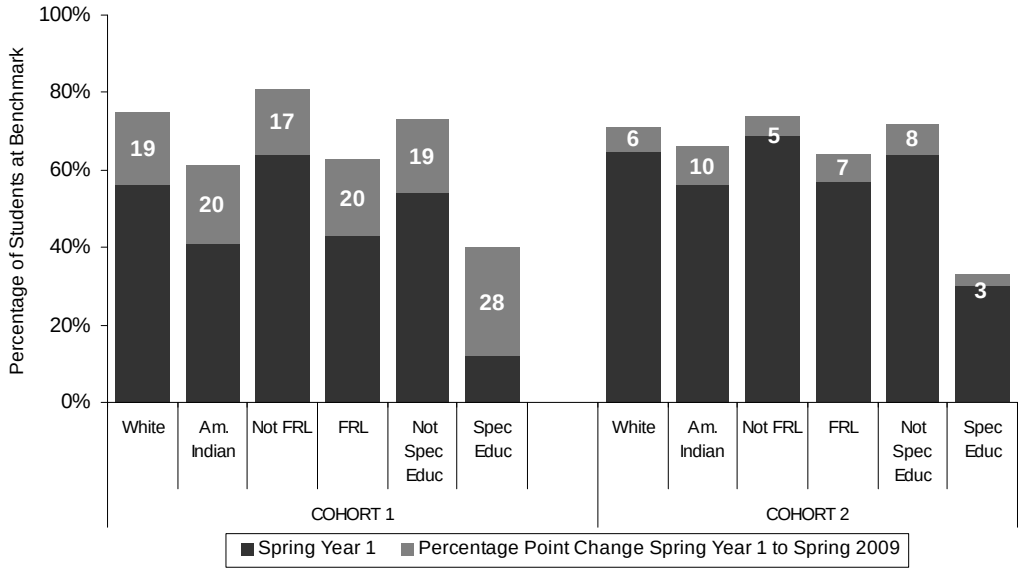


Cohort 2
Percentage of Students at Benchmark and Intensive, Spring 2004 and Spring 2009



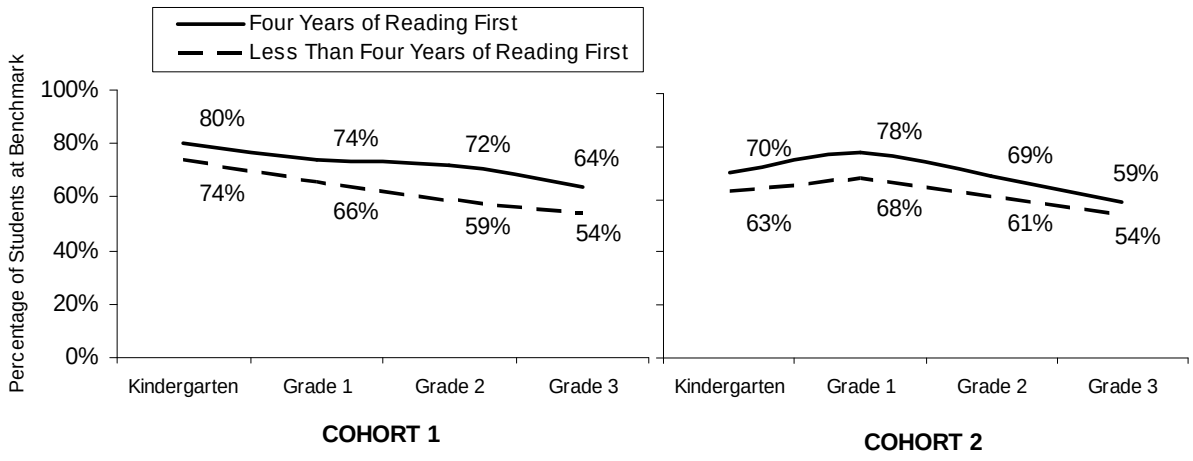
Reading First was effective for American Indian students (Am. Indian), students living in poverty (FRL), and students eligible for Special Education services (Spec Educ). There was a slight tightening of the achievement gap between American Indian and white students, and between students living in poverty and those not living in poverty, in both cohorts, from their schools' first year of participation in Reading First until their last, in spring 2009. A tightening of the achievement gap was witnessed between students eligible and ineligible for Special Education services in cohort 1 schools; the achievement gap between these students grew in cohort 2 schools. All groups experienced positive growth in the percentage of students reading at or above benchmark during this time period

Change in the Percentage of Students at Benchmark, Spring Year 1 to Spring 2009



Furthermore, analyses of intact groups of students who participated in Montana Reading First from the fall of kindergarten through spring of third grade indicate that these students performed better on the DIBELS than they might have had they received less Reading First instruction.

Percentage of Students at Benchmark, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

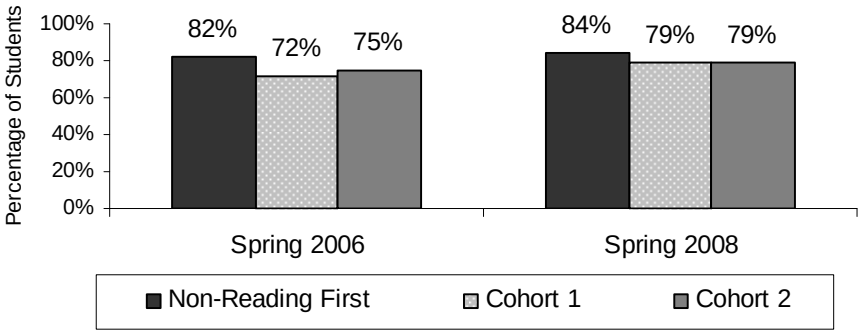


Additional analyses with this same group of intact students showed that Montana Reading First was successful at improving the reading skills of at least one-third of struggling readers in cohort 1 and at least one-half of struggling readers in cohort 2. Finally, the majority of students who ended kindergarten reading at benchmark also ended third-grade reading at benchmark.

In addition to these successes demonstrated with the DIBELS, analysis of data from the Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) in reading from the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) showed that the achievement gap between Reading First and non-Reading First schools tightened in the third grade.

- In 2006, the achievement gap between third-grade students in non-Reading First and Reading First cohort 1 schools was 10 percentage points; in 2008, it was five percentage points.
- In 2006, the achievement gap between third-grade students in non-Reading First and Reading First cohort 2 schools was seven percentage points; in 2008, it was five percentage points.

Percentage of Student at Proficient or Advanced on CRT in Reading



The provision of small-group, targeted interventions contributed to this success. Each year, more than 2,200 Montana Reading First struggling readers were provided such interventions.

Participation in Montana Reading First had a positive impact on more than just the K–3 students in attendance in the schools. Staff members received and valued a wide array of professional development activities including Summer Institutes and Coach and Principal Meetings. These activities were consistently thought to be relevant and of high-quality and to have met the needs of instructional leaders, reading coaches, and reading teachers. In addition, personalized attention was regularly provided to staff members at each Montana Reading First school, as state reading specialists visited the sites and provided technical assistance to improve implementation and increase sustainability.

Teachers also benefited from the additional assistance from their reading coach and principal. Although not all teachers received classroom observations and feedback from these individuals with the same frequency, their input was valued.

All schools adopted a K–3, research-based core reading program. These were universally implemented, in addition to a 90-minute reading block. Systems for administering assessments and analyzing and sharing assessment data were established, and most staff members developed strong habits in using those assessment data when making decisions that affected the students in their school. Collaborative forums—Reading Leadership Teams and grade-level teams—were created; regular

meetings increased collaboration, and staff members found them to be effective and felt attending them was a good use of their time.

Participation in Reading First increased staff members' participation in reading-related professional development and collaborative forums, use of a common, research-based core reading program and a 90-minute reading block, administration of reading assessments and use of data, and ability to provide interventions to struggling readers. When Reading First funding was reduced, not all of these changes were sustained at the same levels that were witnessed while schools received full funding. Across both cohorts, the use of a core reading program, a 90-minute reading block, and progress-monitoring assessments persisted; and participation in reading-related professional development, including observations and feedback from reading coaches and principals, declined. Although the other components of Reading First continued to be implemented in both cohorts of schools, they were implemented less regularly; but the extent to which those decreases occurred varied across cohorts and schools.

Overall, a few aspects of Montana Reading First implementation met with less success. The power of Knowledge Box was appreciated by staff members, but technical difficulties with it limited its use. Study groups went by the wayside when they were no longer required. Not all schools were able to establish uninterrupted reading blocks. Still, only three schools were discontinued for non-compliance.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Montana Reading First staff members at the Office of Public Instruction; in particular Debbie Hunsaker and Kathi Tiefenthaler.

I would also like to thank the principals, coaches, and teachers at the Montana Reading First schools across the state for their participation in the evaluation activities. Staff members at all schools completed surveys and, those in select cohort 2 schools, participated in telephone interviews.

Behind the scenes, thanks goes to members of the Language and Literacy Unit for their time devoted to survey revisions, administration, collection, and scanning. Thanks also go to Jason Greenberg-Motamedi who helped conduct telephone interviews and assisted with data analysis. Finally, Margaret Gunn was particularly helpful in the areas of report editing and formatting.

~~Angela Roccograndi

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Reading First

Reading First is a federal initiative authorized by Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. Often characterized as "the means by which the goals of NCLB are to be achieved," Reading First provides an unprecedented amount of funding and focused support for the improvement of K–3 reading instruction, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all children read at grade level by the end of third grade. In support of this goal, Reading First funds states to support comprehensive programs to improve reading instruction at selected Reading First schools, as well as more broadly in the state.

Most funds that states received under Reading First were distributed to selected Reading First districts and schools, which were eligible for the grant based on state-determined criteria (generally a combination of poverty level and history of low reading performance). While states varied in their plans to implement Reading First, most states' plans included many of the following expectations of grantee schools:

- Selection and implementation of core reading program materials from a list of approved research-based materials or evidence that core reading program materials have been selected on the basis of a rigorous evaluation process
- Hiring of a full-time reading coach to provide mentoring, coaching, training, and demonstration lessons
- Attendance of principals, reading coaches, and district-level coordinators at regular state-provided professional development and of all K–3 staff members at research-based professional development offerings, such as a summer institute
- Creation of a Reading Leadership Team to guide the design and implementation of the grant
- Use of approved assessments that are valid and reliable, analyses of data, and use of results to make reading improvement decisions
- Identification of students in need of intensive reading interventions and provision of appropriate, targeted interventions in a small-group setting using research-based reading interventions selected from a list of approved research-based materials
- Agreement to visits from independent evaluators, as well as state and federal Reading First administrators, and use of their feedback

Montana Reading First

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) was awarded a six-year federal Reading First state grant in July 2003. In January 2004, 17 schools began in cohort 1; in June 2004, three additional schools were added. Spring 2006 marked the end of the three-year grant cycle for these schools. In 2007–2008, these schools continued to receive small continuation grants, invitations to professional development, site visits, and technical assistance from the state.

A second cohort of schools applied for a three-year grant beginning in fall 2005. Thirteen schools were awarded grants; spring 2008 marked the end of their third year of implementation with full funding.

A total of 28 schools, continued to implement Reading First during the 2008–2009 school year; schools in both cohorts received reduced funding to do so.

In 2008–2009, a total of 28 schools (17 from cohort 1 and 11 from cohort 2) in 21 districts continued to participate in Montana Reading First. A total of 5,281 students received reading instruction under Reading First; the majority were enrolled in cohort 1 schools (62%). The participating schools and districts, as well as their K-3 student enrollment, are listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1
2008–2009 School Participating in Montana Reading First

District	School	Cohort	Students
Billings	Newman	Cohort 1	193
	Ponderosa	Cohort 1	265
Box Elder	Box Elder	Cohort 2	154
Butte	Kennedy	Cohort 1	184
	West	Cohort 2	268
	Whittier	Cohort 1	233
Centerville	Centerville	Cohort 1	52
Charlo	Charlo	Cohort 1	106
Dixon	Dixon	Cohort 1	36
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	Cohort 2	15
East Helena	Eastgate	Cohort 1	267
	Radley	Cohort 1	247
Evergreen	East Evergreen	Cohort 2	373
Frazer	Frazer	Cohort 2	42
Great Falls	Morningside	Cohort 2	204
Hardin	Crow Agency	Cohort 1	186
	Hardin Intermediate	Cohort 1	94
	Hardin Primary	Cohort 1	318
Harlem	Harlem	Cohort 2	171
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	Cohort 1	57
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	Cohort 2	62
Helena	Warren	Cohort 1	182
Libby	Libby	Cohort 1	380
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	Cohort 2	188
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	Cohort 1	260
	Pablo	Cohort 1	219
Somers	Lakeside	Cohort 2	246
Stevensville	Stevensville	Cohort 2	279

The External Evaluation

Education Northwest (formerly known as the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory) signed a contract in August 2004 to be the external evaluator for Montana Reading First. The approved evaluation incorporates and integrates both formative and summative evaluation components to examine the following broad areas:

- Effectiveness of the technical assistance provided to grant recipients
- Quality and level of implementation of Reading First activities statewide
- Impact of Reading First activities on desired student and teacher outcomes

These issues were addressed using a range of approaches and instruments, which are described in Chapter 2: Evaluation Methods.

In this final year of evaluating the implementation and impact of Reading First in Montana, the state Reading First director at the OPI asked for summative report documenting school-level changes and highlighting successes since the beginning of Reading First implementation in winter 2004. Several variables made this charge difficult:

The baseline data collected in the summer of 2004 is not truly representative of all cohort 1 schools. While cohort 1 principals, coaches, and teachers were surveyed about the presence of key aspects of Reading First in their schools prior to receiving a Reading First grant, over half of these schools had received funding through the Reading Excellence Act (REA). The 2003–2004 evaluation of Montana Reading First found that:

> *Schools that were formerly part of the Reading Excellence Act (REA) grant had higher levels of self-reported implementation of many Reading First components at baseline than schools that were not formerly part of REA. This is likely attributable to the fact that the REA grant required many of the same structures as Reading First, and former REA schools had the benefit of having worked in these area for a full year-and-a-half prior to the Reading First grant.*[1]

Between 2003–2004 (baseline for cohort 1 schools) and 2005–2006 (the final year of Reading First implementation for cohort 1 schools before entering continuation) the surveys used in the evaluation of Montana Reading First underwent extensive revisions. Some questions included in the 2003–2004 surveys were not present in the 2005–2006 surveys; determining changes from winter 2004 to spring 2006 was challenging.

The 2005–2006 program year was also the first year in which cohort 2 schools began receiving full Reading First funding. While baseline data were collected in summer 2005, the instruments were similar to that used in winter 2004 and, due to the revisions mentioned above, direct comparison of practices cannot occur. The 2007-2008 program year marked the final year of full Reading First funding for cohort 2 schools.

Finally, surveys administered in the spring of 2009 to schools in both cohorts were brief surveys that documented the extent to which key components of Reading First continued to be

[1] Nelsestuen, K. and Autio, E. (2004). *Montana Reading First Annual Evaluation Report 2003-04*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

implemented with greatly reduced funding. Many, but not all, of the items also appeared in the 2005–2006, 2006–2007, and 2007–2008 surveys. In dealing with these challenges, trends are primarily reported instead of the percentages found in each of the varied reports. The report is divided into five chapters.

- **Chapter Two**—Evaluation Methods
- **Chapter Three**—Reading First Implementation Winter 2004 to Spring 2009
- **Chapter Four**—Student Assessment Results from the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) and the *Montana Comprehensive Assessment System Criterion Referenced Test* (CRT) in reading
- **Chapter Five**—Conclusions

CHAPTER TWO: EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation of Montana Reading First collected data about both the implementation and the impact of the project. As in past years, the evaluation relied on information from a variety of instruments and respondents to capture the experience of a wide range of project participants.

The instruments used in the 2008–2009 evaluation included the following:

- **Principal, Coach, and K-3 Teacher Surveys**—short sustainability-focused surveys of these staff members in all Reading First schools
- **Principal, Coach, and K-3 Teacher Interview Protocols**—telephone interviews, focused on changes in Reading First implementation, with these staff members in six randomly selected cohort 2 schools
- **State Director Interview Protocol**—telephone interview, focused on 2008–2009 implementation of Reading First in cohort 1 and 2 schools
- **Student Assessments**—kindergarten through third-grade students' assessment scores on the DIBELS and third-grade students' performance on the Montana Comprehensive Assessments System's (MontCAS) Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) in reading
- **Ongoing review of project documents**

This chapter further describes each of these instruments, includes the response rates obtained, and indicates any limitations or cautions about the data collected. Copies of all instruments are included in the Appendices; cohort 1 surveys are in Appendix A, cohort 2 surveys are in Appendix B, and the interview protocols are in Appendix C.

Surveys

In spring 2009, staff members, including principals, coaches, and K-3 teachers, in cohort 1 and 2 Reading First schools completed shortened surveys. These surveys were nearly identical to the shortened surveys administered to staff members in cohort 1 schools last year. The surveys sought to measure changes in key areas of Reading First program implementation, such as the reading block, use of assessments, attitudes towards the grant, and leadership. The surveys included:

- Principal survey (26 items)
- Reading coach survey (51 items)
- Teacher survey for staff members who taught K–3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (32 items)

Surveys were mailed to the reading coach at each school with explicit instructions for administration. Coaches were encouraged to set aside time for survey completion at a staff meeting or other already-reserved time. Survey instructions encouraged respondents to be candid in their answers and assured respondents' anonymity; cover sheets for each survey further explained the purpose of the survey and intended use of the data. To further encourage honest responses, respondents received confidentiality envelopes in which to seal their surveys before turning them in. Completed surveys were collected by the reading coaches, who were

asked to mail them back to Education Northwest. Education Northwest received coach (28), principal (28), and teacher (298) surveys from all 28 schools—a 100 percent response rate.

Survey responses in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number. In some tables and figures, totals do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Interview Protocols

Interviews were conducted with six principals, six reading coaches, and 12 teachers from six randomly selected cohort 2 Reading First schools. Interviews covered a similar range of topics including professional development, instruction, interventions, and collaboration, and sought to ascertain *why* changes occurred within the school in regard to implementation in each area. Interviews generally lasted no more than 30 minutes.

The telephone interview with the state Reading First director covered varied aspects of Reading First, including state support to Reading First schools, professional development and technical assistance, leadership and meetings, assessments and use of data, roles and responsibilities, instruction and interventions, and sustainability.

Interviews were not taped; instead, extensive notes were recorded and then summarized. Consequently, the quotes provided in this report are not always verbatim, but do represent, as closely as possible, the actual wording of the respondents. Interviewees were assured confidentiality, meaning that their individual or school name would not be attached to their responses.

Student Assessments

Student progress in reading across the 28 Montana Reading First schools was monitored with the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills,* or DIBELS. These data, in addition to the reading *Criterion Referenced Test* (CRT) from the *Montana Comprehensive Assessment System* (MontCAS) were analyzed to measure student progress in Montana Reading First schools.

DIBELS

DIBELS measures the progress of student reading development from kindergarten through third grade in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. The 'benchmark' assessment is administered three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. It includes five measures—Initial Sound Fluency, Letter Naming Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, and Oral Reading Fluency—for which benchmark levels have been established. Two additional measures—Retell Fluency and Word Use Fluency—are available, although there are no benchmarks for these measures. In accordance with DIBELS administration guidelines, not all measures are administered to all students at each testing period; instead, only those measures are administered that apply to skills students should be mastering at a particular period. Table 2-1 indicates which measure is administered to each grade level at each assessment period.

Table 2-1
Scheduled Administration of DIBELS Assessment Measures

Measure	Fall	Winter	Spring
Initial Sound Fluency	K	K	--
Letter Naming Fluency	K, 1	K	K
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	1	K, 1	K, 1
Nonsense Word Fluency	1	K, 1	K, 1
Oral Reading Fluency	2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Retell Fluency	2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Word Use Fluency	K, 1, 2, 3	K, 1, 2, 3	K, 1, 2, 3

Administration of the DIBELS assessment took place at the individual Reading First schools three times during fall, winter, and spring assessment windows set by state project staff members. The benchmark assessments were administered by school or district assessment teams.

After results were collected, DIBELS scores were entered into the online AIMSweb database. Data were downloaded by AIMSweb staff members and sent to Education Northwest (formerly known as NWREL) in June 2008. ***The analyses in this report include only matched students, or those who had both fall 2008 and spring 2009 results.***

Following the guidelines of the DIBELS developers, Education Northwest combined the raw scores from the individual measures and determined overall Instructional Support Recommendations (ISRs). Each student was placed into one of the three ISR categories: "intensive," "strategic," or "benchmark."

McNemar's test (which is based on the chi-square distribution, but accounts for data that are matched from one point in time to the next) was used to determine the statistical significance of changes among matched students from fall to spring of the current school year.

CRT

Third-grade students' achievement on the reading CRT from spring 2006 through spring 2009 were analyzed to determine if Montana Reading First schools closed the achievement gap with other non-Reading First Montana schools.

CHAPTER THREE:
READING FIRST IMPLEMENTATION, WINTER 2004 TO SPRING 2009

Highlights

- Montana Reading First planned on providing Reading First funding to two cohorts of schools for three years each. Over the six-year period of implementing Reading First in Montana, 33 schools received funding; the vast majority did so for at least four years. Three schools were discontinued for non-compliance.
- Participation in reading-related professional development increased when schools received full Reading First funding and decreased when Reading First funding was reduced.
- Montana Reading First sponsored professional development for principals, coaches, and teachers to attend over the six-year period that schools received funding. These opportunities, offered in the form of Summer Institutes and Coach and Principal Meetings, were consistently well-received by participants. In addition to being considered high-quality and relevant, they reportedly met the needs of the instructional leaders, reading coaches, and reading teachers in attendance.
- Prior to Reading First, the majority of teachers experienced classroom observations of reading instruction conducted by their principal. Many teachers also had interactions with a reading coach. In both cases, the frequency of these observations increased after receiving Reading First funding, although not all teachers received frequent observations and fewer received feedback. Generally, when Reading First funding was decreased, the frequency by which these occurred also decreased.
- Knowledge Box was used by the majority of staff members, but far fewer found it regularly useful. Technical difficulties may have contributed to its perceived limited usefulness and may have contributed to limited continued use.
- Study groups were held and teachers participated in them when they were a required component of the grant; when they were no longer required, coaches no longer continued to facilitate them.
- State reading specialists provided regular site visits and technical assistance to the staff members in the Montana Reading First schools. More often than not, their expertise was valued and most school staff members felt their relationship with their state reading specialist was positive. As Reading First funding to the schools declined and school staff member expertise increased, visits from state reading specialists occurred, but less frequently.
- All schools adopted a research-based core reading program and teachers used it regularly through spring 2009. Satisfaction with the core reading program declined over time.
- Under Reading First, 90-minute reading blocks were almost universally implemented; 90-minute, *uninterrupted* reading blocks were slightly less so. Over time, an increasingly larger proportion of teachers used the reading block to address non-reading related tasks.
- From the first full year of Montana Reading First funding to spring 2009, between two-fifths and one-half of all Montana Reading First students were served in small-group interventions—at least 2,200 students each year.

- Assessment data were used prior to Reading First, but practices around the use of assessments increased during the time in which schools received full Reading First funding, and persisted when that funding was reduced. In most cases principals, teachers, and coaches have consistently used data for a variety of purposes over the years they have participated in Reading First.
- Under Reading First, the vast majority of schools established Reading Leadership Teams, and teachers participated in grade-level meetings and study groups, increasing the level of collaboration above pre-Reading First levels.
- In 2008–2009, across both cohorts, use of a core reading program, the implementation of a 90-minute uninterrupted reading block, and the administration of progress-monitoring assessments persisted at levels similar to 2007–2008; participation in reading related professional development declined. Other aspects of implementation varied across cohorts.

CHAPTER THREE:
READING FIRST IMPLEMENTATION, WINTER 2004 TO SPRING 2009

The 2008–2009 school year marked the final year in which the Montana Reading First schools received funding. This chapter looks at the key components of Reading First implementation in Montana from the first year schools received funding through spring 2009. It summarizes findings from surveys of principals, coaches, and teachers, and interviews conducted at site visits and by telephone. It includes synopses of school participation in Montana Reading First, professional development, technical assistance, instruction, interventions, assessments and data, collaboration, and sustainability.

School Participation in Montana Reading First

Montana Reading First planned on providing Reading First funding to two cohorts of schools for three years each. Over the six-year period of implementing Reading First in Montana, 33 schools received funding; the vast majority did so for at least four years. Fifteen schools received Reading First funding for six years (45%); four did so for five years (12%); eleven did so for four years (33%); two did so for three years (6%); and one did so for two years (3%).

Seventeen cohort 1 schools first received Montana Reading First funding during the 2003–2004 school year, and implementation started in January 2004 (see Table 3-1). The following summer, three schools were added to cohort 1, bringing the total up to 20 participating schools. Throughout 2004–2005, 2005–2006, and 2006–2007, the 20 cohort 1 schools continued to implement Reading First with full funding; in 2007–2008, they did so with reduced funding. The 2007–2008 school year also marked the first school year in which all 20 cohort 1 schools did not implement Reading First—one school, Lame Deer, was discontinued due to compliance issues. In 2008–2009, two additional schools opted out of receiving continued funding, leaving 17 cohort 1 schools participating in Montana Reading First.

The 2005–2006 school marked the first in which cohort 2 schools implemented Montana Reading First. Thirteen schools were awarded grants to do so and continued to do so in 2006–2007. In 2007–2008, one cohort 2 school, Lodge Grass, was discontinued for non-compliance. In summer 2008, a second cohort 2 opted out of Reading First, leaving 11 cohort 2 schools implementing Reading First during the 2008–2009 school year.

Table 3-1
School Participation in Montana Reading First by Year and Cohort

District	School	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Cohort 1							
Billings	Newman	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ponderosa	X	X	X	X	X	X
Butte	Kennedy		X	X	X	X	X
	Whittier		X	X	X	X	X
Centerville	Centerville	X	X	X	X	X	X
Charlo	Charlo	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dixon	Dixon	X	X	X	X	X	X
East Helena	Eastgate	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Radley	X	X	X	X	X	X
Great Falls	Longfellow	X	X	X	X	X	
	West	X	X	X	X	X	
Hardin	Crow Agency	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Hardin Intermediate	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Hardin Primary	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hays	Hays/Lodge Pole	X	X	X	X	X	X
Helena	Warren	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lame Deer	Lame Deer		X	X	X		
Libby	Libby	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Pablo	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cohort 2							
Box Elder	Box Elder			X	X	X	X
Butte	West			X	X	X	X
Dodson	Dodson			X	X	X	
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park			X	X	X	X
Evergreen	East Evergreen			X	X	X	X
Frazer	Frazer			X	X	X	X
Great Falls	Morningside			X	X	X	X
Harlem	Harlem			X	X	X	X
Heart Butte	Heart Butte			X	X	X	X
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass			X	X		
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy			X	X	X	X
Somers	Lakeside			X	X	X	X
Stevensville	Stevensville			X	X	X	X

Professional Development

A wide variety of professional development opportunities were made available to staff members in Montana Reading First schools. These included state-sponsored Summer Institutes and Coach and Principal Meetings, classroom-based coaching, school-based access to Knowledge Box, and participation in study groups.

Participation in Professional Development

Prior to their participation in Reading First, most surveyed staff members participated in reading-related professional development opportunities once or a few times a year. Once schools received Montana Reading First funding, a wide range of professional development opportunities were made available to them:

- Principals and coaches were required to regularly attend principal and coach meetings.
- Annually, principals, coaches, teachers, and paraprofessionals participated in the Montana Reading First Summer Institute. These large-scale events garnered the participation of the majority of teachers (at least 85%) every year. Furthermore the majority (about two-thirds) of teachers indicated that the professional development they received was sustained and intensive.

When Reading First funding was reduced, participation in reading-related professional development declined.

- The majority of cohort 1 and 2 principals and coaches reported attending no more than three Reading First professional development opportunities.
- A large number of teachers (66% in cohort 1 and 46% in cohort 2) indicated they participated in less professional development than in the previous year, and smaller proportions (no more than half) of teachers indicated that their professional development was ongoing.

Montana Reading First Sponsored Professional Development

Montana Reading First sponsored professional development for principals, coaches, and teachers to attend over the six-year period that schools received funding. These opportunities, offered in the form of Summer Institutes and Coach and Principal Meetings, were consistently well-received by participants. In addition to being considered high-quality and relevant, they reportedly met the needs of the instructional leaders, reading coaches, and reading teachers in attendance.

Summer Institutes. The first Summer Institute was held in summer 2004. This and subsequent Summer Institutes brought together the knowledge of nationally renowned experts in a variety of fields and Montana Reading First staff members to provide current, research-based professional development. Staff members participated in project-level, school-level and classroom-level workshops (for example administering the DIBELS, using the core program, and teaching the five components of reading, respectively).

The majority (at least 80%) of teachers in cohorts 1 and 2 consistently reported that the Summer Institutes were relevant, and included high-quality presentations and strategies that they used in

their classrooms. Slightly fewer (at least 70%) thought these institutes provided time to reflect and share with colleagues. In spring 2005, the majority (55%) of cohort 1 teachers considered most of the Summer Institute a review; no more than one-third of cohort 2 teachers ever did.

Starting in summer 2005, cohort 1 schools participated in a Summer Institute held at their schools. This change was to bring increased differentiation to professional development, as each institute addressed the specific needs of the school and its staff members. These institutes were generally led by each school's reading coach and their state reading specialist and sometimes involved paid consultants providing staff-specific professional development (for example, training in a core replacement). Cohort 2 schools participated in Summer Institutes in this format in summers 2007 and 2008.

Regardless of the setting, the majority (at least 75%) of teachers thought the professional development they received was focused on what happens in the classroom. When funding allocations were reduced, smaller proportions of teachers agreed, but still, generally, two-thirds of teachers did.

Coach and Principal Meetings. Except for 2004, in which a mandatory leadership institute for coaches and principals was sponsored, coaches and principals attended Coach and Principal Meetings. These meetings occurred regularly throughout the school year and for all six years that Montana Reading First was implemented. Separate meetings were held for cohort 1 and 2 principals and coaches. The location changed with each meeting to distribute the burden of travel.

Coach and principal meetings were two-day events in which principals were generally expected to attend the first day, and coaches both days. The first day of training covered content that was pertinent to both principals and coaches (such as the five components of reading, conducting observations and providing feedback, working with resistance, using assessment data). The second day was more focused on the responsibilities of the coach (for example, facilitating literacy instruction in the classroom and implementing research-based reading programs).

The majority (at least 75%) of principals and coaches from cohort 1 and 2 schools consistently found the coach and principal meetings to be relevant, with high-quality presentations and adequate opportunities to reflect and share with their colleagues. At no time did more than one-third of principals and coaches consider the meetings "mostly review;" however, decreasing proportions of principals and coaches felt the meetings were differentiated. Furthermore, the majority of coaches and principals in cohorts 1 and 2 were pleased with the quality of the training they received in coaching methods and instructional leadership, respectively. (Fewer cohort 1 coaches in 2007, and cohort 2 principals in 2009, did.)

Nearly all interviewed principals and coaches were enthusiastic about the Coach and Principal Meetings. One principal felt that "every single session I have gone to has been really good; I've not gone to one that I felt was not worth the time." In particular, both coaches and principals found that one of the most important aspects of the meetings was the ability to meet with other educators. One complaint shared by several principals was that the meetings required too much travel time for "too little meeting."

Classroom-based Professional Development

In Montana Reading First, teachers receive individualized feedback on their reading instruction, based upon classroom observations conducted by their coach and their principal. Classroom observations are a central piece of the coaching role. It is from these experiences that coaches plan individual, grade-level, and K–3 professional development activities. In the case of principals, their observations and feedback serve a dual role. Principal time in the classroom can support improvements in teachers' instruction. Classroom presence is also an important aspect of instructional leadership. It helps to reinforce to teachers that a commitment to the Reading First strategies is expected and to demonstrate the importance of reading instruction to teachers and students.

Prior to Reading First, the majority of teachers experienced classroom observations of reading instruction conducted by their principal. Many teachers also had interactions with a reading coach. In both cases, the frequency of these observations increased after receiving Reading First funding, although not all teachers received frequent observations and fewer received feedback. Generally, when Reading First funding was decreased, the frequency by which these occurred also decreased.

Reading Coaches. Many teachers, especially those in cohort 1, had previous exposure to coaching. While schools received full Reading First funding, the number of teachers who received coaching increased. Coaches spent a large portion of their time observing, demonstrating, or providing feedback to teachers, and the majority of teachers appreciated their assistance. Not all teachers received observations and feedback with the same frequency, and that frequency decreased when funding for Reading First decreased.

Prior to Reading First, teachers in some schools had exposure to coaching. The majority of cohort 1 schools had received funding under the Reading Excellence Act (REA), and in those schools, the majority of Reading First coaches were coaches under REA. Coaching was far less prevalent in the cohort 2 schools.

While participating in Reading First, the vast majority of teachers received coaching. At no time did more than 12 percent of teachers report that they had *not* been observed by, and provided feedback from, their reading coach. Every year, observing, demonstrating, or providing feedback to individual K–3 teachers was the task on which coaches reported spending the largest percentage of their time.

Some teachers received observations and feedback more frequently than others. Larger proportions (at least 75%) of teachers in cohort 2 schools appeared to be regularly observed (more than once a month) than were teachers in cohort 1 schools (about three-fifths). Fewer teachers in both cohorts were regularly provided with feedback (about one-half).

When Reading First funding decreased, so too did the percentage of teachers reporting regular observations and feedback from their coaches. Teachers in cohort 1 schools were less likely to receive regular observations (49%) compared to those in cohort 2 schools (65%). More than one-third, but less than one-half, of teachers received regular feedback. Teachers in cohort 2 schools who participated in interviews in spring 2009 corroborated this finding. A large minority of teachers noted that their coach made fewer observations this year than last. One teacher said:

She has observed less often, but anytime that I have needed help or guidance, I send an e-mail and she gets back quickly, and comes during my prep time to help. For example, if I do a new template, she will come and model it for me. She also comes when I ask to observe the reading block, to watch and see if I am being effective. (Teacher)

In interviews with teachers across all years, most teachers were very positive about the effect that their coach had upon their school and their teaching. Teachers reported that their coach taught new strategies to implement, served as a "sounding board," and "kept teachers on their toes." However, there was always a small minority of teachers who did not feel their coach helped improve their instruction, primarily because their coach had not spent their time coaching, as was anticipated.

Principals. Prior to Reading First, the majority of teachers experienced classroom observations of their reading instruction conducted by their principal. The number of teachers who were observed by their principal increased in the schools while they received full Reading First funding. Not all teachers received observations and feedback from their principal with the same frequency. When Reading First funding decreased, some principals conducted more classroom observations, other conducted less. The frequency of providing feedback to teachers afterwards, decreased.

Prior to Reading First, the majority of teachers experienced classroom observations of their reading instruction conducted by their principal, but this increased while schools received full Reading First funding. Prior to receiving Reading First, at least 89 percent of cohort 1 and 84 percent of cohort 2 teachers reported being observed by their principals. While receiving Reading First funding, in all years except 2005–2006, no more than 3 percent of teachers reported they had *not* been observed by their principal. The majority (at least 80%) of teachers also received some feedback from their principal afterwards.

Some teachers received observations and feedback more frequently than others. Larger proportions of teachers in cohort 1 schools appeared to be regularly (at least once a month) observed than were teachers in cohort 2 schools (these percentages ranged from 63% to 85% in cohort 1 and from 44% to 86% in cohort 2, across the four years of data). Fewer teachers, overall, but a larger proportion of teachers in cohort 1 (49% to 86%) than in cohort 2 (29% to 87%) were regularly provided with feedback.

Principals in cohort 1 increased the frequency by which they observed teachers after receiving reduced Reading First funding, while observations in cohort 2 decreased; regardless of cohort, principals provided feedback less often.

Knowledge Box

Knowledge Box is a digital learning software system that delivers media via the Internet directly to the classroom or computer lab. All Montana Reading First schools had a contract to access it.

Knowledge Box was used by the majority of staff members, but far fewer found it regularly useful. Technical difficulties may have contributed to its perceived limited usefulness and may have contributed to limited continued use.

In every year, the majority (at least 82%) of teachers indicated they had used Knowledge Box. Consistently fewer (no more than 55%) regularly found it useful. In interviews in cohort 2 schools, in spring of 2009, staff members reported mixed reviews of its continued use. While the majority of coaches and principals noted that they used it less frequently than ever (primarily because of on-going technical difficulties), some teachers reported regularly using Knowledge box in their classrooms.[2]

Study Groups

Staff members in Montana Reading First schools were required to participate in study groups. In almost every year, Montana Reading First administrative staff members selected materials for use across the state and assigned work to be completed by participants. When required, study groups were held and teachers participated in them quarterly; when they were no longer required, coaches no longer continued to facilitate them.

Study groups usually met three to four times during the year. Overall, study groups were supported more by staff members in cohort 1 than by staff members in cohort 2. Principals and coaches tended to find attending them a better use of time than did teachers; no more than two-thirds of teachers ever reported that attending them was a good use of time. Interviewed coaches thought that study groups might have been "overwhelming for teachers… because of all the extra responsibility," and added that more choice in the selection of reading materials would have been appreciated. Study groups were not required during the 2008–2009 school year. None of the interviewed staff members indicated they occurred; few staff members commented on their absence—indicating they were not missed.

Technical Assistance

Montana Reading First employed the use of state reading specialists to provide individualized technical assistance to its participating schools. These consultants regularly visited the schools, met with staff members, strategized, and problem-solved while taking into consideration the climate and needs of each individual school. Afterwards they provided detailed written reports and feedback to the school. At the beginning of implementation, one state reading specialist was used; four were employed thereafter.

State reading specialists provided regular site visits and technical assistance to the staff members in the Montana Reading First schools. More often than not, their expertise was valued and most school staff members felt their relationship with their state reading specialist was positive. As Reading First funding to the schools declined and school staff member expertise increased, visits from state reading specialists were less frequent; but still, every school was visited at least once during the 2008–2009 school year.

In the last two years of full-funding for cohort 1 and the three years of full funding for cohort 2, state reading specialists visited the majority (more than half) of the Montana Reading First schools at least five times. When funding decreased, so too did the frequency of visits, so that by 2008–2009, state reading specialists visited most schools two to three times. All schools were

[2] Knowledge Box content will be accessible to all Montana educators after Reading First. The Montana Office of Public Instruction has posted the content on their Web site.

visited at least once. One coach reported on the reduced frequency of technical assistance as follows:

> *We have received a few e-mails personalized to our school, and one visit from the State Reading Specialist asking about our needs, such as general help with testing, grouping, or data analysis, or if we had any questions. But we didn't need any help. (Coach)*

Except for one year (2007–2008) in the past five years, coaches found the assistance they received from their state reading specialists usually or always helpful, and, since spring 2006, most interviewed coaches and principals were very positive in their appraisal of their state reading specialists. One coach said:

> *She's a wonderful listener, supports us as far as wanting to stand beside us. With difficulties, she supports us in any way she can, although she can't always fix the problem. She returns phone calls, communicates with e-mail/phone—is more than accessible. She shares materials, books for book studies and accommodates requests. She provides good site visits; sometimes we get a different perspective, she sees things the principal and I don't see. (Coach)*

Over the years, only a few coaches or principals reported that they did not have as positive a relationship with state staff members or that they were unhappy with the lack of responsiveness to their needs.

Instructional Components

At the classroom level, implementation of Montana Reading First affected the delivery of instruction to over 11,500 K–3 students in Montana. Schools adopted a research-based core reading program and a 90-minute uninterrupted reading block in which they applied the instructional strategies they learned from their professional development.

Core Reading Program

One requirement of Reading First was the adoption of a scientifically-based core reading curriculum. All schools adopted a research-based core reading program and teachers used it regularly through spring 2009. Satisfaction with the core reading program declined over time, but at least two-thirds of teachers remained positive.

This occurred across all of the Reading First schools in their first year of funding. Over time, most interviewed coaches and teachers were very positive about their core program, and their fidelity to it. The majority of teachers expressed very similar ideas of what fidelity meant and most teachers agreed that these expectations were reasonable. As teachers became more experienced with their core they were allowed more flexibility with how they implemented it. One teacher said:

> *In the past few years, as we've gained experience with the core program, we've been given more flexibility to make changes to it. I still stick to the intention, but I might change the amount of time spent on a certain activity or story, depending on the levels of my students.* (Teacher)

However, since the beginning of Montana Reading First, a small group of teachers have complained about the need for fidelity. Furthermore, while the majority of teachers have been satisfied with the core curriculum used in their school, these percentages have declined. In 2005, 81 percent of cohort 1 teachers were satisfied with their core reading program; in 2009, 66 percent were. In 2007, 88 percent of cohort 2 teachers were satisfied with the core reading program; in 2009, 70 percent were.

Use of, and fidelity to, the core persisted through spring 2009. After receiving reduced Reading First funding, almost all coaches reported that fidelity to the core was about the same as in their last year of full funding. While the percentage of cohort 1 teachers reporting that they used the core reading program less than in the previous year increased over the past three years, in spring 2009, only four percent of teachers reported this. In 2007, the vast majority of cohort 2 teachers indicated regular use of their core reading program. In spring 2009, only 1 percent of teachers indicated using the core reading program less than during the 2007–2008 school year.

90-Minute, Uninterrupted Reading Block

Under Reading First, 90-minute reading blocks were almost universally implemented; 90-minute, *uninterrupted* reading blocks were slightly less so. Over time, an increasingly larger proportion of teachers have used the reading block to address non-reading related tasks.

Prior to Reading First, no more than three-fifths of teachers reported using a 90-minute reading block. Except in kindergarten, where there was more variation, the vast majority (at least 92%) of Montana Reading First schools implemented a 90-minute reading block from their first year of funding through spring 2009. Consistently, fewer schools implemented a 90-minute, uninterrupted reading block; but still, the vast majority did so (at least 88% in spring 2009). Furthermore, the vast majority of teachers did not use their reading block for non-reading related tasks. Over time these percentages have changed—4 percent of cohort 1 teachers did so at least monthly in 2005 and 8 percent did so in 2009; 5 percent of cohort 2 teachers did so in 2006, 11 percent did so in 2009.

Interventions

Some schools had experience providing students with interventions prior to receiving their Reading First grants; however after they received funding, at least one-third of all Montana Reading First students participated in interventions each year from fall 2004 through spring 2009. In most years, the majority of coaches and teachers felt their intervention providers were well trained and their intervention systems were capable of serving all of their struggling students.

Prior to receiving Reading First funding, some of the cohort 1 schools had some type of intervention system in place as a result of their prior participation in REA. While planning for interventions was covered in 2004 professional development, Montana Reading First administrators did not anticipate that many students would be provided interventions beyond what the schools could offer struggling readers from their core curriculum during the 2003–2004 school year.

From the first full year of Montana Reading First funding to spring 2009, between two-fifths and one-half of all Montana Reading First students were served in small-group interventions—at least

2,200 students each year. Differences existed in the establishment and delivery of interventions to students in cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools.

Cohort 1 schools have consistently served more than one-third of their K–3 students in interventions since the 2004–2005 school year. The majority of students were served in intensive interventions in the earlier years, but more were served in less intensive interventions in the later years. Since spring 2006, larger proportions of coaches (more than two-thirds) than teachers (less than two-thirds) agreed that their school was doing an excellent job of providing interventions to all students who needed them. Generally, these staff members' opinions climbed to a peak in spring 2007, but declined every year since.

Cohort 2 schools consistently served at least two-fifths of their K–3 students in interventions, and served more students in intensive interventions than in less intensive interventions since they first received funding in 2005–2006. Like coaches and teachers in cohort 1, larger proportions of coaches than teachers agreed that their school was doing an excellent job of providing interventions to all students; however these staff members' opinions continued to become more positive through spring 2009. Coaches in cohort 2 have consistently reported spending larger proportions of their time providing interventions to students than did coaches in cohort 1.

Regardless of cohort, scheduling interventions was a continual challenge.

Average intensive intervention group sizes have consistently been below nine students and were no more than six students in most years for both cohorts.

Except for one spring, the majority of coaches (at least three-quarters) agreed that their intervention providers were well trained; while variation existed, cohort 1 coaches tended to be more positive than cohort 2 coaches. Teachers tended to be less positive than coaches and, usually, over the four years, at least two-thirds of teachers agreed the intervention providers were well trained. Professional development for intervention providers was a persistent challenge.

Assessments and Data

Assessment data were used prior to Reading First, but practices around the use of assessments increased during the time in which schools received full Reading First funding, and persisted when that funding was reduced. In most cases principals, teachers, and coaches have consistently used data for a variety of purposes over the years they have participated in Reading First.

Benchmark and Progress-Monitoring Assessments

Assessment data were used prior to Reading First, but practices around the use of assessments increased during the time in which schools received full Reading First funding, and persisted when that funding was reduced.

Prior to Reading First, the majority of cohort 1 and cohort 2 teachers had looked at standardized assessment data at least once during the school year; but less than one-third did so regularly. About three-fifths reported that assessment data regularly informed their instruction. Systems

for sharing assessment data existed in two-fifths of the cohort 2 schools; as more than half of the cohort 1 schools had REA grants, these schools probably had these systems as well.

Under Reading First, structures were established and maintained for administering assessments and analyzing and sharing assessment data. In most cases, these structures persisted when Reading First funding declined. Staff members developed and continued to have full confidence in their ability to reliably administer benchmark assessments, and benchmark and progress-monitoring assessments were adopted and continued to be regularly administered to most, if not all, K–3 students.

Use of Data

In most cases principals, teachers, and coaches have consistently used data for a variety of purposes over the years they participated in Montana Reading First. Over time, the vast majority of principals used assessment data to look at schoolwide trends, and about two-thirds did so when communicating with teachers about their instruction. Principals' use of data when communicating with teachers about their students declined; but still, more than three-quarters usually did so.

Most (about 90%) teachers used data to identify students for interventions, many (about 80%) did so when communicating with colleagues, and the majority (about 75%) did so when grouping students. Over time, about three-quarters of teachers reported they looked at assessment data at least two to three times a month.

Every year, coaches in cohort 1 schools reported spending a large proportion of their time in data-related tasks, although this declined in 2008–2009; a smaller proportion of cohort 2 coaches reported doing so.

When interviewed, most coaches usually reported that they were pleased with their school's structures for data use, and that teachers were, with only a few exceptions, using data on a day to day basis. However, coaches had mixed views about whether their school used data to its full potential. They typically reported the need to improve data use, even when they said their school was using data fairly frequently. One coach remarked that "there is always room for improvement."

Collaboration

Montana Reading required that each school build structures that facilitated communication and collaboration, including regular grade-level and Reading Leadership Team (RLT) meetings. Other activities, including study groups, staff meetings, and common teacher planning time contributed to this as well. Prior to receiving Reading First funding, some of the cohort 1 schools had experience with RLTs under REA. Under Reading First, the vast majority of schools established RLTs, and teachers participated in grade-level meetings and study groups, increasing the level of collaboration above pre-Reading First levels.

At the beginning of Montana Reading First, just over half of teachers in both cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools believed that their school had a collaborative culture. While receiving Reading First funding, the majority of teachers and coaches (generally, at least two-thirds) thought that

their school staff members had become more collaborative or that their school had a collaborative culture. Trends indicate that coaches were more optimistic than teachers, and staff members in cohort 1 schools were more optimistic than those in cohort 2 schools.

In most years, all of the schools had an established RLT that tended to meet monthly, although, over time, the frequency of RLT meetings decreased. From spring 2005 through spring 2009 between two-thirds and three-fourths of teachers agreed that their RLT was visible and effective.

Attendance at grade-level meetings was regular and valued by most teachers in most years. The majority of teachers reported attending grade-level meetings more than once a month. Cohort 1 teachers' participation in these meetings decreased in 2006–2007 and 2007–2008, but increased to its previous level (over 70%) in 2009. Cohort 2 teachers' participation has been generally higher than that of cohort 1 teachers; but this year it dropped. In 2009, two-thirds of teachers reported attending grade-level meetings more than once a month. From spring 2005 through spring 2009, between two-thirds and three-fourths of teachers agreed that attending grade-level meetings was a good use of their time.

Sustainability

Thirty-three schools received Montana Reading First funding, and the majority did so for over four years. Cohort 1 schools received reduced funding starting in 2007–2008, and cohort 2 school funding was reduced for the first time in the 2008–2009 school year. No schools will receive Montana Reading First funding in 2009–2010.

Sustaining *all* components of Montana Reading First, at the levels at which they were implemented while schools received full funding, will be a challenge. New district and school-initiatives will be addressed. Staff turnover will affect buy-in. Less funding will impact school staff members' ability to provide and participate in professional development and training, to purchase new materials, and to maintain staffing levels to provide interventions. Transferring responsibilities once held by the coach to teachers will decrease the amount of time that teachers previously devoted to other tasks.

A critical aspect of sustainability is buy-in—to what extent do the staff members in schools implementing Reading First agree with the philosophy of Reading First? Over time, the vast majority of principals and coaches have supported Reading First's instructional changes; about two-thirds of teachers have. This year marked the first year in which smaller proportions of principals and coaches supported these instructional changes. It may be that staff turnover is beginning to impact buy-in at this level. Cohort 1 teachers' support for Reading First has dropped steadily from three-quarters of teachers supporting the changes in 2005 to less than two-thirds doing so in 2009. Teachers in cohort 2 continue to support the instructional changes; whereas over one-half did so in 2006, two-thirds did in 2009.

At some level, this support affects the extent to which the key components of Reading First will be sustained during the 2009–2010 school year and beyond. Data regarding implementation changes from 2007–2008 to 2008–2009 indicated that many components of Montana Reading First were sustained as grant funding decreased. Across both cohorts these included:

- Use of a core reading program
- Implementation of a 90-minute uninterrupted reading block
- Administration of progress-monitoring assessments

In cohort 1 schools, principals and teachers maintained their previous levels of data use. The frequency of classroom observations and feedback by principals and coaches remained similar, as did teacher's attendance at grade-level meetings and the provision of interventions to struggling readers. District support for Reading First decreased during the 2008–2009 school year, benchmark assessments may not have been administered to all students in all schools, and the frequency of RLT meetings declined.

In cohort 2 schools, district support for Reading First remained high. Regular administration of benchmark assessments and regular meetings of the RLT persisted. However teachers reported less frequent use of data and attendance at grade-level meetings. The frequency of principal and coach classroom observations and feedback decreased, as did the number of students receiving interventions.

Staff members in both cohorts reported less participation in professional development related to reading.

Table 3-2 summarizes these findings; a more detailed analysis of changes can be found in Appendix D.

Table 3-2
Changes in Implementation of Reading First from 2007–2008 to 2008–2009

Component	Same or More	Slightly Less	Substantially Less
Core reading program	Cohort 1; Cohort 2		
90-minute reading block	Cohort 1; Cohort 2		
Progress-monitoring assessments	Cohort 1; Cohort 2		
Buy-in	Cohort 1; Cohort 2		
Principal leadership	Cohort 1; Cohort 2		Cohort 2
Data use by teachers	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	
Grade-level meetings	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	
Interventions	Cohort 1		Cohort 2
Coaching	Cohort 1		Cohort 2
District support	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	
Benchmark assessments	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	
Reading Leadership Team	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	
Professional development in reading		Cohort 1	Cohort 2

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDENT ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Highlights

Table 4-1 summarizes, for each cohort and grade, the percentage of students at benchmark and intensive on the DIBELS; and the change in the percentage of students in that category from fall 2008, spring 2008, and the first spring after implementation for each cohort.

Table 4-1
Percentage of Students at Benchmark and Intensive on the DIBELS in Spring 2009 with the Percentage Point Change Over Time

	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third
Percentage of Students At Benchmark				
Cohort 1	84%	71%	65%	58%
Change from Fall 2008	+50	-2	+11	+8
Change from Spring 2008	+3	-3	-2	-2
Change from Spring 2004	+24	+16	+16	+16
Cohort 2	81%	72%	66%	56%
Change from Fall 2008	+47	+3	+7	+3
Change from Spring 2008	+3	-3	+2	-2
Change from Spring 2006	+18	+4	+5	+2
Percentage of Students At Intensive				
Cohort 1	7%	10%	17%	15%
Change from Fall 2008	-20	+3	-1	-5
Change from Spring 2008	-2	+2	±0	+2
Change from Spring 2004	-17	-12	-14	-12
Cohort 2	9%	7%	15%	11%
Change from Fall 2008	-18	±0	±0	-4
Change from Spring 2008	-1	+1	+2	±0
Change from Spring 2006	-11	-2	-6	-5

Across-Years DIBELS Results

- The proportion of kindergarten students achieving the spring benchmark increased every year and the proportion of students at intensive decreased every year in both cohorts.
- The proportion of first-grade students achieving the spring benchmark increased every year except 2009, and the proportion of first-grade students at intensive decreased every year except 2009, in both cohorts.
- In most years, larger proportions of second- and third-grade students attained benchmark and smaller proportions were at intensive. In no year did the proportion of students attaining benchmark drop below, or the proportion of students at intensive rise above, the level attained in the first year of Reading First.

- Across cohorts, kindergarteners were most likely to attain benchmark; they were followed by first-, second-, and third-grade students.
- Across cohorts, kindergarten and first-grade students were less likely to be at intensive than were second- and third-grade students.
- There was a slight tightening of the achievement gap between American Indian and white students and between students living in poverty and students not living in poverty, in both cohorts, from their schools' first year of participation in Reading First until their last in spring 2009. A substantial closing of the achievement gap was witnessed between students eligible and ineligible for Special Education services in cohort 1 schools; the achievement gap between these students grew in cohort 2 schools.

Longitudinal DIBELS Results

- Students, in both cohorts, who participated in Montana Reading First consecutively for four years from kindergarten through third grade, appeared to have attained higher levels of achievement than they might have with less Reading First instruction. However, the achievement gap between white students and American Indian students persisted.
- Montana Reading First was effective for about two-thirds of its student participants. It was very effective at keeping students at benchmark from spring of their kindergarten year to spring of their third-grade year, and least effective at moving students from strategic in spring of kindergarten to benchmark by spring of third grade.

Within-Year DIBELS Results

- Kindergarten had the highest percentage of students at benchmark by spring 2009, followed by first grade, second grade, and third grade. Kindergarten and first grade had the lowest percentage of students at the intensive level, while second grade had the highest.
- From fall 2008 to spring 2009 statistically significant *increases* in the percentage of students at benchmark were detected in kindergarten, second, and third grade and significant *decreases* in the percentage of students at intensive were detected in kindergarten and third grade.
- From fall 2008 to spring 2009, gains in the percentage of students at benchmark were witnessed at all grade levels in cohort 2. Otherwise variation existed across grades and within cohorts in changes in the percentages of students at benchmark in cohort 1, and at intensive in cohorts 1 and 2.
- White students were most successful in Montana Reading First, followed by Hispanic students and American Indian students. Students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and Special Education were less likely to attain benchmark than their non-eligible peers.

Achievement Gap Analysis

- An analysis of data from the Criterion Referenced Test in reading from the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System showed a narrowing of the achievement gap between third-grade students in Reading First and non-Reading First schools. The narrowing was detected in both cohorts.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDENT ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Results from students administered two assessments— the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) and the Criterion-Referenced Test in reading (CRT)—were analyzed to show the impact of Montana Reading First on its K-3 student participants.

All Montana Reading First schools use the DIBELS to monitor student progress in reading. The DIBELS is administered three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring. *Chapter Two: Methods* contains a detailed description of the procedures for coding and analyzing the raw scores. The DIBELS analyses first look at cohort-level progress from baseline to spring 2009 and compare the percentage of students at benchmark and intensive in the spring of each year. DIBELS results from two intact groups of students—one from cohort 1 and the second from cohort 2—who participated in Montana Reading First from kindergarten through third grade are included.

Second, DIBELS data from the 2008–2009 school year at the project- and cohort-level were analyzed. The results show progress made on the DIBELS in the final year of Montana Reading First. Combined results from cohorts 1 and 2 present a picture of achievement across all 28 Montana Reading First schools and are followed by results from cohort 1 and cohort 2.

Please note that all DIBELS analyses included only students with valid fall and spring scores.

Third-grade students' achievement on the reading CRT from the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) from spring 2006 through spring 2009 were analyzed to determine if Montana Reading First schools closed the achievement gap with other Montana schools and with other high-poverty schools.

Across Years Progress on the DIBELS

The following are cohort-level results from Montana Reading First K-3 students' achievement on the DIBELS from baseline to spring 2009. Data are first presented by grade level and then by key demographic categories, including American Indians and students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) and Special Education.

Grade Level Results

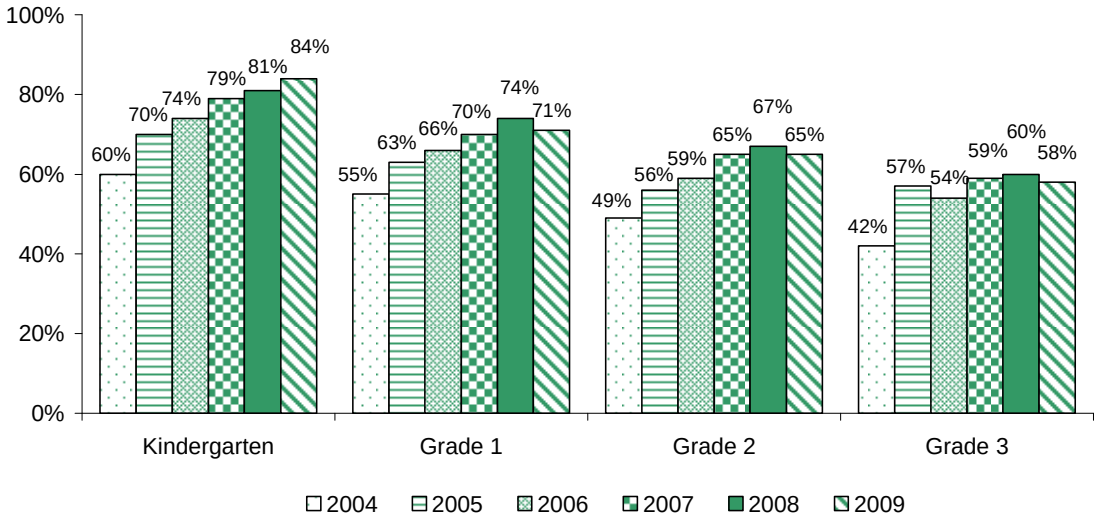
Cohort 1. Changes in student progress on the DIBELS from spring 2004 to spring 2009—those at or above benchmark and those at intensive—were analyzed.

Figure 4-1 presents the changes in the percentage of cohort 1 students at or above benchmark as measured by the DIBELS every spring from 2004 through 2009. The figure shows that since 2004, at all grades levels, increased percentages of students were at benchmark in spring. Specifically:

- The proportion of kindergarten students achieving the spring benchmark increased every year. In spring 2004, three-fifths of kindergarten students were at benchmark; since spring 2006, at least three-quarters were—representing a 24 percentage point increase in the proportion of kindergarten students at benchmark from spring 2004 to spring 2009.

- The proportion of first-grade students achieving the spring benchmark increased every year, except 2009. In spring 2004, just over half of first grade students were at benchmark; since spring 2006, over two thirds were—representing a 16 percentage point increase in the proportion of first-grade students at benchmark from spring 2004 to spring 2009.
- The proportion of second grade students achieving the spring benchmark increased every year, except 2009. In spring 2004, about one-half of second grade students were at benchmark; since spring 2006, at least three-fifths were—representing a 16 percentage point increase in the proportion of second-grade students at benchmark from spring 2004 to spring 2009.
- The proportion of third-grade students achieving the spring benchmark increased in most years. In spring 2004 about two-fifths of third-grade students were at benchmark; since spring 2005, about three-fifths were—representing a 16 percentage point increase in the proportion of students at benchmark from spring 2004 to spring 2009.

Figure 4-1



Percentage of Cohort 1 Students At or Above Benchmark on the DIBELS, Spring 2004–Spring 2009

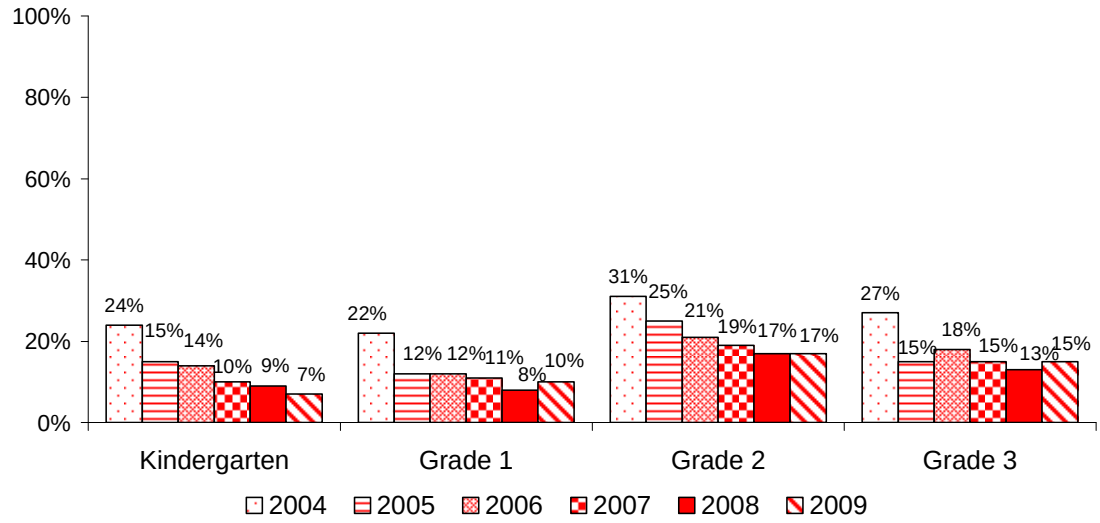
Figure 4-2 presents the changes in the percentage of cohort 1 students at intensive as measured by the DIBELS every spring from 2004 through 2009. The figure shows that since 2004, at all grades levels, decreased percentages of students were at intensive in spring. Specifically:

- The proportion of kindergarten students at intensive decreased every year. In spring 2004, one-quarter of kindergarten students were at intensive; since spring 2007, no more than 10 percent were—representing a 17 percentage point decrease in the proportion of kindergarten students at intensive from spring 2004 to spring 2009.
- The proportion of first-grade students at intensive decreased every year, except 2009. In spring 2004, just over one-fifth of first grade students were at intensive; since spring 2005,

about 10 percent were—representing a 12 percentage point decrease in the proportion of first-grade students at intensive from spring 2004 to spring 2009.

- The proportion of second-grade students at intensive never increased from spring 2004. In spring 2004, about one-third of second grade students were at intensive; since spring 2006, about one-fifth were—representing a 14 percentage point decrease in the proportion of second-grade students at intensive from spring 2004 to spring 2009.
- The proportion of third-grade students at intensive decreased in most years. In spring 2004 about one-quarter of third-grade students were at intensive; since spring 2005, about one-sixth were—representing a 12 percentage point decrease in the proportion of students at intensive from spring 2004 to spring 2009.

Figure 4-2



Percentage of Cohort 1 Students at the Intensive Level, Spring 2004 to Spring 2009

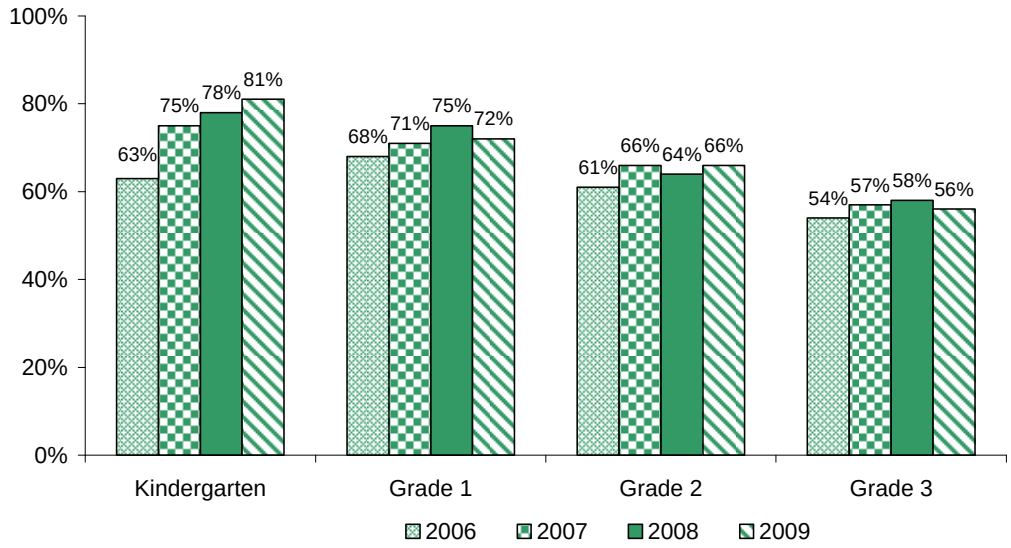
Cohort 2. Changes in student progress on the DIBELS from spring 2006 to spring 2009—those at or above benchmark and those at intensive—were analyzed.

Figure 4-3 presents the changes in the percentage of cohort 2 students at or above benchmark, as measured by the DIBELS, every spring from 2006 through 2009. The figure shows that since 2006, at all grades levels, increased percentages of students were at benchmark in spring. Specifically:

- The proportion of kindergarten students achieving the spring benchmark increased every year. In spring 2006, three-fifths of kindergarten students were at benchmark; since spring 2007, at least three-quarters were—representing a 18 percentage point increase in the proportion of kindergarten students at benchmark from spring 2006 to spring 2009.
- The proportion of first-grade students achieving the spring benchmark increased every year, except 2009. In spring 2006, just over two-thirds of first grade students were at benchmark; since spring 2007, over 70 percent were—representing a four percentage point increase in the proportion of first-grade students at benchmark from spring 2006 to spring 2009.

- The proportion of second grade students achieving the spring benchmark increased almost every year. In spring 2006, about three-fifths of second-grade students were at benchmark; since spring 2007, about two-thirds were—representing a seven percentage point increase in the proportion of second-grade students at benchmark from spring 2004 to spring 2009.
- The proportion of third-grade students achieving the spring benchmark increased every year, except 2009. In spring 2006, over one-half of third-grade students were at benchmark; since spring 2005, less than three-fifths were—representing a two percentage point increase in the proportion of students at benchmark from spring 2006 to spring 2009.

Figure 4-3



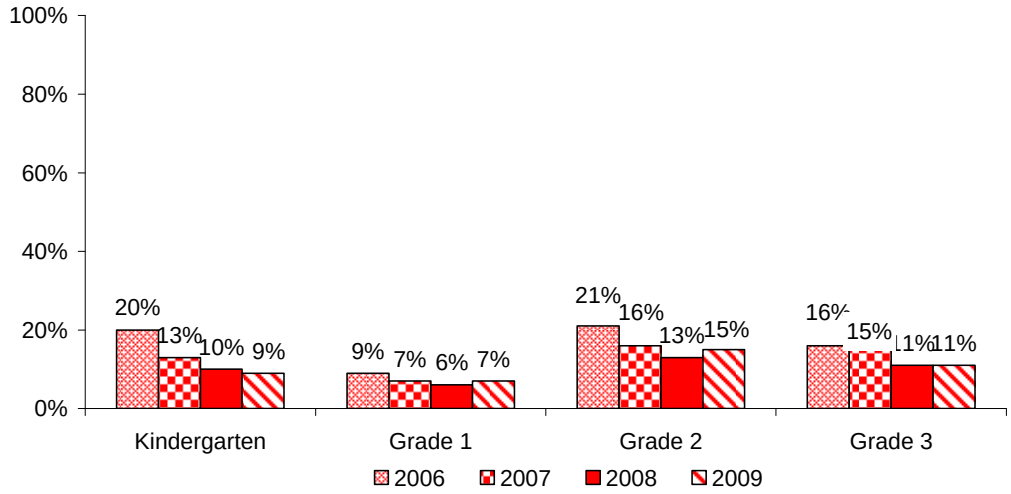
Percentage of Cohort 2 Students At or Above Benchmark on the DIBELS, Spring 2006–Spring 2009

Figure 4-4 presents the changes in the percentage of cohort 2 students at intensive as measured by the DIBELS every spring from 2006 through 2009. The figure shows that since 2006, at all grades levels, decreased percentages of students were at intensive in spring. Specifically:

- The proportion of kindergarten students at intensive decreased every year. In spring 2006, one-fifth of kindergarten students were at intensive; since spring 2007, about one-tenth were—representing an 11 percentage point decrease in the proportion of kindergarten students at intensive from spring 2006 to spring 2009.
- The proportion of first-grade students at intensive decreased every year, except 2009. Since spring 2006, less than 10 percent of first-grade students were at intensive; from spring 2006, there has been a two percentage point decrease in the proportion of first-grade students at intensive.
- The proportion of second-grade students at intensive decreased in most years. In spring 2006, about one-fifth of second-grade students were at intensive; since spring 2006, about one in seven were—representing a six percentage point decrease in the proportion of second-grade students at intensive from spring 2006 to spring 2009.

- The proportion of third-grade students at intensive has never increased since 2006. In spring 2006 about one in seven third-grade students were at intensive; since spring 2008, about one in ten were—representing a five percentage point decrease in the proportion of students at intensive from spring 2006 to spring 2009.

Figure 4-4



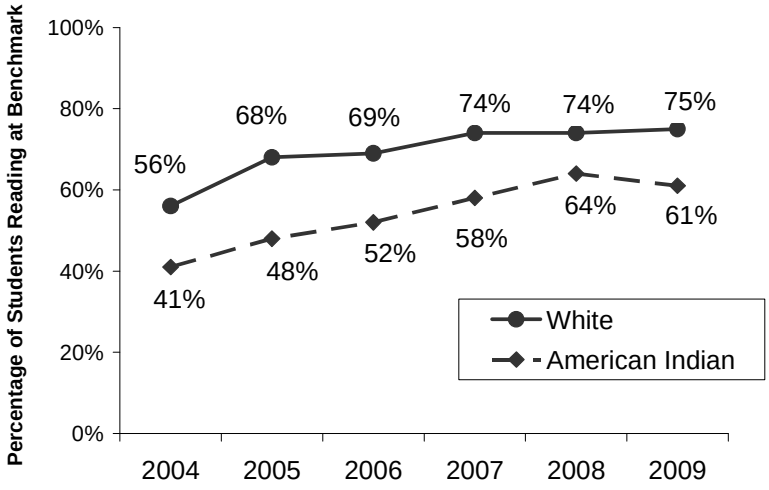
Percentage of Cohort 2 Students at the Intensive Level, Spring 2006 to Spring 2009

American Indian Students

Historically, the progress of American Indian students has lagged behind that of their white peers. While the achievement gap was only closed slightly between these two groups under Reading First, the changes in the percent of American Indian students reading at or above benchmark increased from the first year of implementation to the spring of 2009 in both cohorts.

Figure 4-5 depicts this growth in cohort 1. Specifically, Figure 4-5 shows that in cohort 1, the percentage of white students reading at benchmark increased from 56 percent to 75 percent from spring 2004 to spring 2009, representing an increase of 19 percentage points. The percentage of American Indian students reading at benchmark made a similar increase—20 percentage points—representing a minimal closing of the achievement gap (-1 percentage points). Forty-one percent of American Indian students attained benchmark in reading in spring 2004, while 61 percent did so in spring 2009.

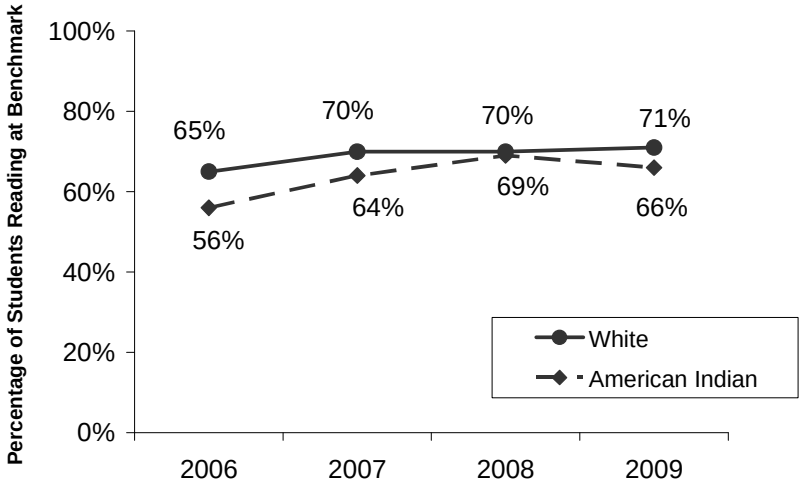
Figure 4-5



Percentage of Cohort 1 Students Reading at Benchmark Spring 2004 to Spring 2009, by Ethnicity

Figure 4-6 depicts this growth for cohort 2 students. In cohort 2 the percentage of white students reading at benchmark increased from 65 percent to 71 percent from spring 2006 to spring 2009, representing an increase of six percentage points. The percentage of American Indian students reading at benchmark made a larger increase, 10 percentage points—a notable closing of the achievement gap (-4 percentage points); the achievement gap was negligible in spring 2008. Fifty-six percent of American Indian students attained benchmark in reading in spring 2006, while 66 percent did so in spring 2009.

Figure 4-6



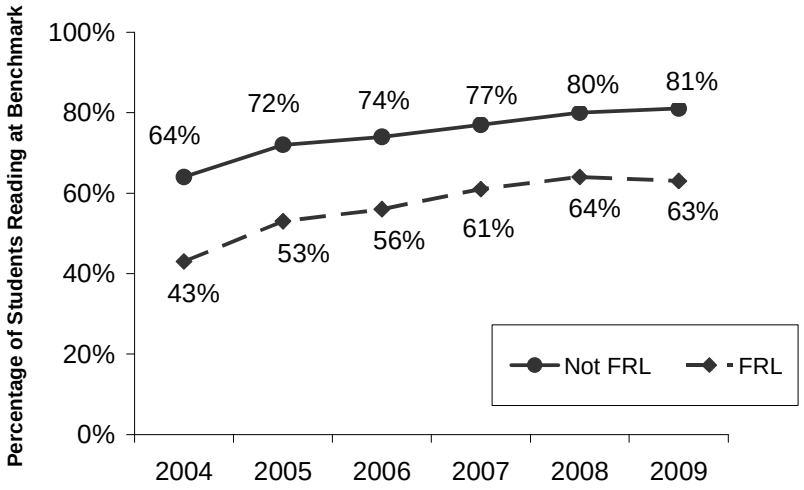
Percentage of Cohort 2 Students Reading at Benchmark Spring 2004 to Spring 2009, by Ethnicity

Students Living in Poverty

Similar to the history of American Indian students, students living in poverty tend to under-perform compared to their peers who do not live in poverty. While the achievement gap was only closed slightly between these two groups under Reading First, the changes in the percentage of poor students (measured by their eligibility to receive free-and reduced-price lunch) reading at or above benchmark increased from the first year of implementation to the spring of 2009 in both cohorts.

Figure 4-7 depicts this growth in cohort 1. Specifically, Figure 4-6 shows that in cohort 1 the percentage of students not living in poverty who were reading at benchmark increased from 64 percent to 81 percent from spring 2004 to spring 2009, representing an increase of 17 percentage points. The percentage of student living in poverty who were reading at benchmark made a slightly larger increase—20 percentage points—a notable closing of the achievement gap (-3 percentage points). Forty-three percent of students living in poverty attained benchmark in reading in spring 2004, while 63 percent did so in spring 2009.

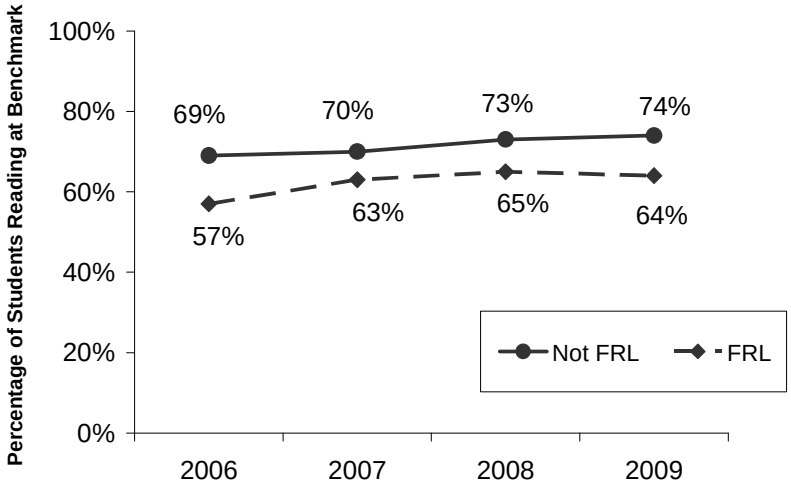
Figure 4-7



Percentage of Cohort 1 Students Reading at Benchmark
Spring 2004 to Spring 2009, by Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch

Figure 4-8 depicts this growth in cohort 2. In cohort 2, the percentage of student not living in poverty who were reading at benchmark increased from 69 percent to 74 percent from spring 2006 to spring 2009, representing an increase of five percentage points. The percentage of students living in poverty reading at benchmark made a slightly larger increase—seven percentage points—a minimal closing of the achievement gap (-2 percentage points). Fifty-seven percent of students living in poverty attained benchmark in reading in spring 2006; 64 percent did so in spring 2009.

Figure 4-8



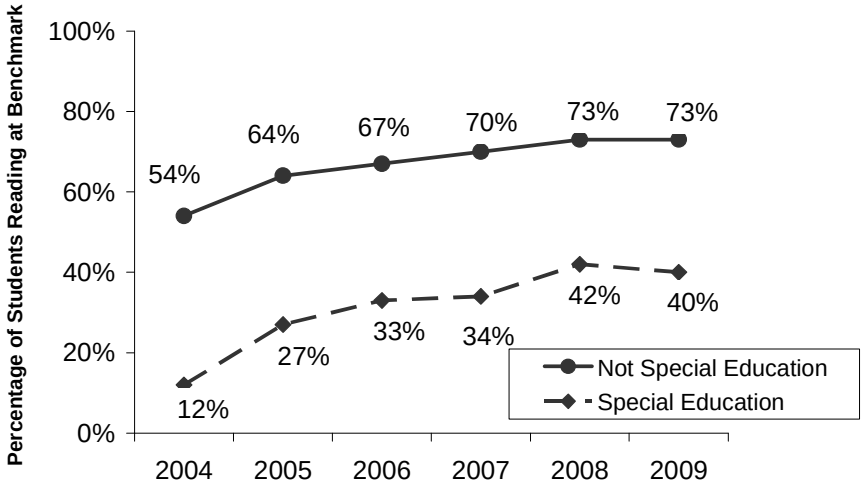
Percentage of Cohort 2 Students Reading at Benchmark
Spring 2004 to Spring 2009, by Eligibility for Free-and Reduced-Price Lunch

Special Education Students

Finally, the achievement of students eligible for Special Education services is similar to that of American Indians and students living in poverty—they tend to under-perform compared to their non-eligible peers. Under Reading First, there was a notable closing of the achievement gap between students' eligible and ineligible for Special Education in cohort 1; the achievement gap between theses students increased in cohort 2. The changes in the percentage of students eligible for Special Education reading at or above benchmark increased from the first year of implementation to the spring of 2009 in both cohorts.

Figure 4-9 depicts this growth in cohort 1. Specifically, Figure 4-9 shows that in cohort 1 the percentage of student's ineligible for Special Education services reading at benchmark increased from 54 percent to 73 percent from spring 2004 to spring 2009, representing an increase of 19 percentage points. The percentage of students eligible for Special Education services reading at benchmark made a larger increase—28 percentage points—a notable closing of the achievement gap (-9 percentage points). Twelve percent of students eligible for Special Education services attained benchmark in reading in spring 2004, while 40 percent did so in spring 2009.

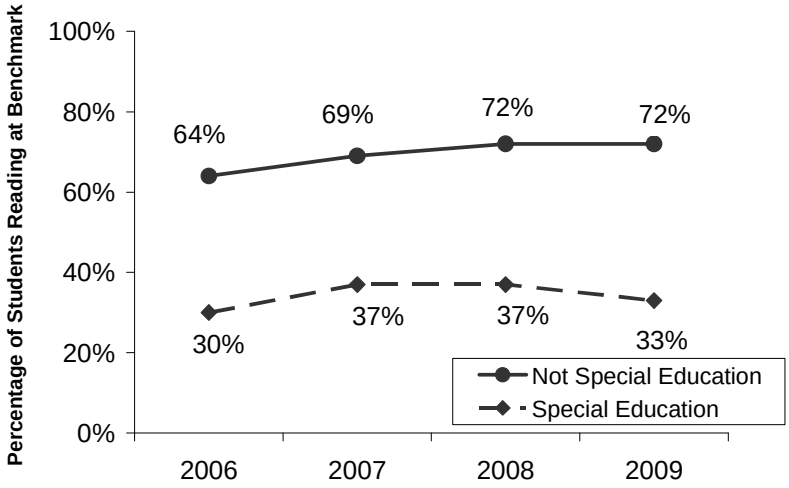
Figure 4-9



Percentage of Cohort 1 Students Reading at Benchmark Spring 2004 to Spring 2009, by Eligibility for Special Education

Figure 4-10 depicts this growth in cohort 2. In cohort 2, the percentage of students' ineligible for Special Education services reading at benchmark increased from 64 percent to 72 percent from spring 2006 to spring 2009, representing an increase of eight percentage points. The percentage of students eligible for Special Education services reading at benchmark made a slightly smaller increase, three percentage points—a notable widening of the achievement gap (+5 percentage points). Thirty percent of students eligible for Special Education services attained benchmark in reading in spring 2006, while 33 percent did so in spring 2009.

Figure 4-10



Percentage of Cohort 2 Students Reading at Benchmark Spring 2004 to Spring 2009, by Eligibility for Special Education

Longitudinal Analyses

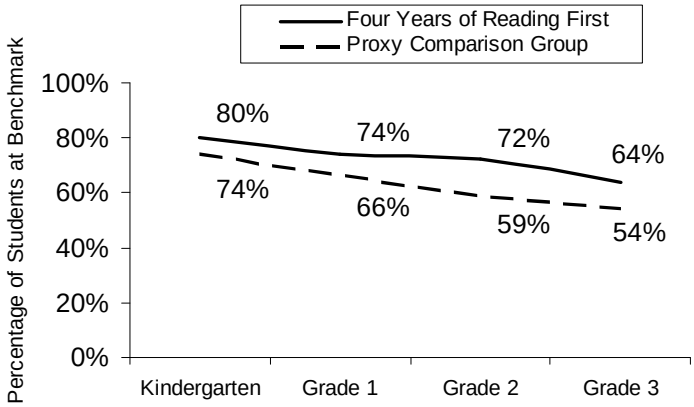
This section examines changes in DIBELS results for an intact group of students over time. Specifically, it looks at the progress of cohort 1 and 2 students who began kindergarten in fall 2005 and completed third grade in spring 2009. To ensure that these analyses capture students who received a full four years of the program, it only includes students for whom a full four years of assessment results were available. The achievement of these students is compared to the best available comparison—the percentage of students from all cohort 1 and 2 Montana Reading First schools, at benchmark in spring 2006 (proxy comparison group).

Figure 4-11 presents the percentage of an intact group of 403 cohort 1 students at benchmark on the DIBELS, as they progressed through four years of Montana Reading First. Figure 4-12 presents the percentages for an intact group of 234 cohort 2 students as they progressed through Montana Reading First. In both figures, the students who received four years of Montana Reading First are denoted by the solid black line (titled "Four Years of Reading First") and the proxy comparison group students are denoted by a dashed line. Put another way, the statistics for the "Four Years of Reading First" group are longitudinal results as one group of students advanced through kindergarten to third grade from spring 2006 to spring 2009, and those of the proxy comparison group are cross-sectional results from all students, from each cohort, in spring 2006.

It is important to note the limitations to the following analyses. First, students in both groups received some Reading First instruction. In cohort 1, second- and third-grade students received over two years of Reading First instruction from January 2004 through spring 2006; first-grade students this instruction from fall 2004 through spring 2006; and kindergarten students received Reading First Instruction during the 2005–2006 school year. In cohort 2, kindergarten, first- and second-grade students all received one year of Reading First instruction (2005–2006). Given the absence of a true comparison or control group, it is impossible to know what the alternate possibilities would have been. Second, the analysis did not control for other factors that could have had a positive effect on student achievement. And finally, the group of students who participated in Montana Reading First for four years includes those who remained at the same or another Reading First school for four consecutive years. They therefore represent a fairly stable subpopulation of students who were likely to achieve at higher levels than would students whose residency is more transient. The proxy comparison group is more likely to include the very high-mobility students who tend to perform lower on assessments such as the DIBELS.

Figure 4-11 shows that a higher proportion of cohort 1 students with four years of Reading First achieved benchmark at all grades than those in the proxy comparison group.

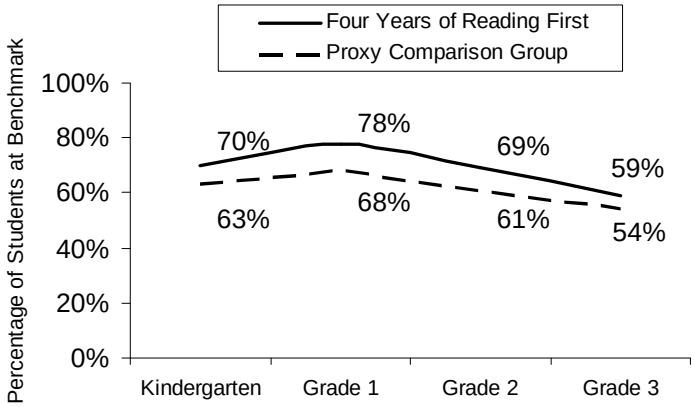
Figure 4-11



Percentage of Students at Benchmark: Cohort 1 Students with Four Years of Reading First and Proxy Comparison Group

Figure 4-12 shows also that a higher proportion of cohort 2 students with four years of Reading First achieved benchmark at all grades than those in the proxy comparison group.

Figure 4-12

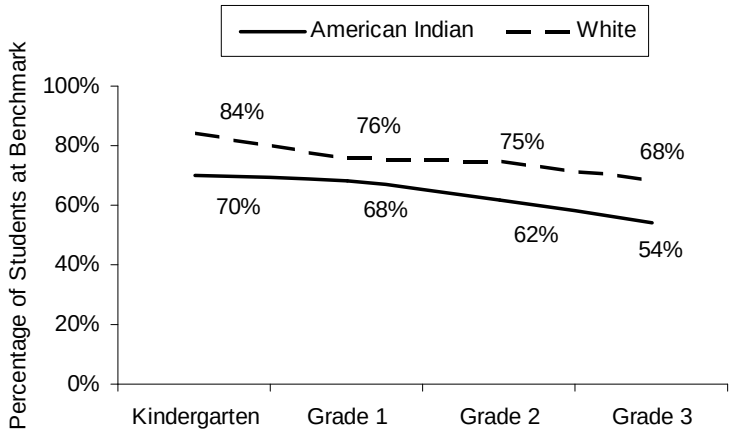


Percentage of Students at Benchmark: Cohort 2 Students with Four Years of Reading First and Proxy Comparison Group

These results suggest that students participating in Montana Reading First consecutively for four years, from kindergarten through third grade, attained higher levels of achievement than they might have with less Reading First instruction.

Figure 4-13 shows that of cohort 1 students continuously enrolled in Reading First for four years, a larger percentage of white students attained benchmark every year than did their American Indian peers. The gap was narrowest in first grade (eight percentage points); in kindergarten, second, and third grade the gap was about 14 percentage points.

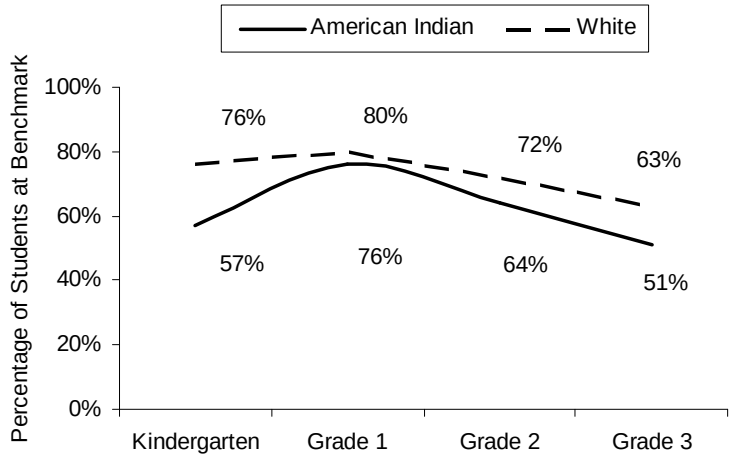
Figure 4-13



Cohort 1 Students with Four Years of Reading First Achieving Benchmark, by Ethnicity

Figure 4-14 shows that of cohort 2 students continuously enrolled in Reading First for four years, in every grade, a larger percentage of white students attained benchmark than did their American Indian peers. The gap was widest in kindergarten (19 percentage points) and smallest in first grade (four percentage points) and increased thereafter to third grade (12 percentage points).

Figure 4-14



Cohort 2 Students With Four Years of Reading First Achieving Benchmark, by Ethnicity

Another way of estimating the effectiveness of Reading First is to compare students' level of achievement in third grade against their level of achievement in kindergarten. Ideally, all students who were at benchmark would have remained at benchmark and those who were at the intensive or strategic level in kindergarten would have advanced to the benchmark level by the end of third grade.

Tables 4-2 and 4-3 show the percentages of students who were at the intensive, strategic, or benchmark levels in kindergarten, and at each level in third grade. The estimate of effectiveness is the proportion of students who went from intensive to strategic or benchmark, the proportion who went from strategic to benchmark, and the proportion who started at benchmark and remained at benchmark.

Table 4-2
Movement of Cohort 1 Student in DIBELS' ISRs, Spring 2005 to Spring 2009, and Effectiveness

End of Kindergarten Spring 2005	N	End of Third Grade			
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark	"Effectiveness"
Intensive	39	64%	21%	15%	36%
Strategic	43	21%	44%	35%	35%
Benchmark	321	4%	22%	74%	74%
Total Effectiveness	403				66%

- The benchmark retention rate was highest; but a substantial percentage of students remained at intensive. Almost three-quarters (74%) of the students who ended kindergarten at benchmark, ended third grade at benchmark; 44 percent of the students who ended kindergarten at strategic, ended third grade at strategic; and 64 percent who ended kindergarten at intensive, ended third grade at intensive.
- There were successes in moving students toward grade-level reading. One-third (35%) of students who ended kindergarten at strategic moved to benchmark by the end of third grade and 15 percent of students who ended kindergarten at intensive moved to benchmark by third grade; one-fifth (21%) of students who ended kindergarten at intensive completed third grade at strategic.
- Some slippage occurred. One-quarter of the students who ended kindergarten at benchmark slipped to strategic (22%) or intensive (4%) by the end of third grade; 21 percent of students who ended kindergarten at strategic slipped to intensive by third grade.
- Montana Reading First was effective for two-thirds of cohort 1 students. It was most effective at keeping cohort 1 benchmark students at benchmark and less effective at moving students not at benchmark towards benchmark.

Table 4-3
Movement of Cohort 2 Student in DIBELS' ISRs, Spring 2005 to Spring 2009, and Effectiveness

End of Kindergarten Spring 2005	N	End of Third Grade			
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark	"Effectiveness"
Intensive	35	29%	54%	17%	71%
Strategic	32	16%	38%	47%	47%
Benchmark	163	4%	26%	70%	70%
Total Effectiveness	230				67%

- The benchmark retention rate was the highest. Seventy percent (70%) of the students who ended kindergarten at benchmark, ended third grade at benchmark; 38 percent of the students who ended kindergarten at strategic, ended third grade at strategic; and 29 percent who ended kindergarten at intensive, ended third grade at intensive.

- There were successes in moving students toward grade-level reading. Almost one-half (47%) of students who ended kindergarten at strategic moved to benchmark by the end of third grade; 17 percent of students who ended kindergarten at intensive moved to benchmark by third grade; over one-half (54%) of students who ended kindergarten at intensive completed third grade at strategic.
- Some slippage occurred. Just over one-quarter of the students who ended at benchmark in kindergarten slipped to strategic (26%) or intensive (4%) by the end of third grade; 16 percent of students who ended kindergarten at strategic slipped to intensive by third grade.
- Montana Reading First was effective for two-thirds of cohort 2 students. It was most effective at keeping cohort 2 benchmark students at benchmark and moving intensive students out of intensive; it was less effective at moving students from strategic to benchmark.

2008–2009 Progress on the DIBELS

The following presentation includes project level results from school year 2008–2009 administration of the DIBELS. Included are:

- The percentages of students in each of the DIBELS Instructional Support Recommendation (ISR) categories in spring 2009, by grade
- Changes in the percentages of students at benchmark and intensive from fall 2008 to spring 2009, by grade
- The percentages of students in each of the DIBELS ISR categories in spring 2009, by key demographic categories

These same analyses are then presented for each cohort.

Project-Level Results

Table 4-4 shows the percentage of Montana Reading First students in the intensive, strategic, and benchmark categories in spring 2009.

Table 4-4
Spring 2009 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohorts 1 and 2

All Montana Reading First Schools	N	Percentage of Students with Spring 2009 Instructional Support Recommendations		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Kindergarten	1,183	8%	10%	83%
Grade 1	1,122	9%	20%	71%
Grade 2	1,120	16%	19%	65%
Grade 3	1,059	13%	29%	57%

Kindergarten had the highest percentage of students at benchmark (83%), followed by first grade (71%), second grade (65%), and third grade (57%). Kindergarten and first grade had the lowest percentage of students at the intensive level, while second grade had the highest percentage (16%).

Table 4-5 shows changes in the percentage of students at benchmark and intensive from fall 2008 to spring 2009; statistically significant changes are denoted with an asterisk. While the kindergarten changes were the largest by far, statistically significant *increases* in the percentage of students at benchmark were detected in kindergarten, second, and third grade (McNemar chi-square p=.000); there was no gain in the percentage of students at benchmark in first grade.

Table 4-5
Percentage of Montana Reading First Students at Benchmark and at Intensive Over Time

	Grade			
Percent of Students at	**K**	**1**	**2**	**3**
N	1,183	1,122	1,120	1,059
Benchmark				
Fall 2008	34%	71%	56%	51%
Winter 2009	73%	67%	72%	56%
Spring 2009	83%	71%	65%	57%
Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)	+49*	±0	+9*	+6*
Intensive				
Fall 2008	27%	7%	17%	18%
Winter 2009	6%	7%	14%	18%
Spring 2009	7%	9%	16%	13%
Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)	-20*	+2*	-1	-5*

Statistically significant *decreases* in the percentage of students at intensive were detected in kindergarten and third grade (McNemar chi squares p=.000). The one percentage point decrease in the percentage of students at intensive in second grade was not significant, but the two percentage point increase in the percentage of students at intensive in first grade was (McNemar chi squares p <.03).

Table 4-6 shows the percentage of Montana Reading First students in the intensive, strategic, and benchmark categories in spring 2009, by key demographic categories.

Table 4-6
Spring 2009 Instructional Support Recommendations, by Key Demographic Categories

Demographic Category	N	Percentage of Students with Spring 2009 Instructional Support Recommendations		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
American Indian	1,418	14%	23%	63%
Hispanic	159	17%	17%	66%
White	2,821	10%	17%	73%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	1,913	8%	14%	78%
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	2,571	14%	22%	63%
Not Eligible for Special Education	4,138	9%	19%	72%
Eligible for Special Education	346	39%	24%	37%

- White students were more likely to be at benchmark than American Indian and Hispanic students (differences of 10 and seven percentage points, respectively); higher proportions of Hispanic students attained benchmark than did American Indian students.
- Students not eligible for free/reduced-price lunch were more likely to be at benchmark than those who were eligible (a difference of 15 percentage points).
- Students not eligible for Special Education were more likely to be at benchmark than those who were eligible (a difference of 35 percentage points). Just over one-third of Special Education students attained benchmark in spring 2009.

Cohort-Level Results

This section presents the same information presented in the previous section, Project-Level Results, only by cohort.

Spring 2009 DIBELS results by cohort and are displayed in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7
Spring 2009 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohorts 1 and 2

Cohort and Grade	N	Percentage of Students with Spring 2009 Instructional Support Recommendations		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Cohort 1	2,821			
Kindergarten	776	7%	9%	84%
Grade 1	675	10%	19%	71%
Grade 2	712	17%	18%	65%
Grade 3	658	15%	27%	58%
Cohort 2	1,663			
Kindergarten	407	9%	10%	81%
Grade 1	447	7%	21%	72%
Grade 2	408	15%	19%	66%
Grade 3	401	11%	33%	56%

Table 4-8 shows changes in the percentage of students at benchmark and intensive from fall 2008 to spring 2009 for cohorts 1 and 2; again, statistically significant changes are denoted with an asterisk.

Table -4-8
Percentage of Montana Reading First Students at Benchmark and at Intensive Over Time, by Cohort and Grade

	Grade			
Percent of Cohort 1 Students at	**K**	**1**	**2**	**3**
N	776	675	712	658
Benchmark				
Fall 2008	34%	73%	54%	50%
Winter 2009	72%	69%	69%	58%
Spring 2009	84%	71%	65%	58%
Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)	+50*	-2	+11*	+8*
Intensive				
Fall 2008	27%	7%	18%	20%
Winter 2009	7%	7%	15%	20%
Spring 2009	7%	10%	17%	15%
Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)	-20*	+3*	-1	-5*
Percent of Cohort 2 Students at				
N	407	447	408	401
Benchmark				
Fall 2008	34%	69%	59%	53%
Winter 2009	77%	66%	76%	53%
Spring 2009	81%	72%	66%	56%
Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)	+47*	+3	+7*	+3
Intensive				
Fall 2008	27%	7%	15%	15%
Winter 2009	4%	6%	12%	16%
Spring 2009	9%	7%	15%	11%
Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)	-18*	±0	±0	-4*

- **Cohort 1**. Like the overall trends, the kindergarten changes were the largest by far. Statistically significant *increases* in the percentage of students at benchmark were detected in kindergarten and second and third grade (McNemar chi-square p=.000); the decrease in the percentage of students at benchmark in first grade was not significant. Statistically significant *decreases* in the percentage of students at intensive were detected in kindergarten and third grade (McNemar chi squares p=.000). The one percentage point decrease in the percentage of students at intensive in second grade was not significant, but the three percentage point increase in the percentage of students at intensive in first grade was (McNemar chi squares p <.01).

- **Cohort 2**. Again, the kindergarten changes were the largest by far. Gains in the percentage of students at benchmark were witnessed at every grade level; the gains in kindergarten and second grade were significant (McNemar chi-square *p*=.000 and p=.001, respectively). Significant decreases in the percentage of students at intensive were found in kindergarten and third grade (McNemar chi-square *p*=.000 and p=.002, respectively); there were no changes in the percentage of students at intensive from fall 2008 to spring 2009 in first and second grades.

Table 4-9 shows the percentage of Montana Reading First students in the intensive, strategic, and benchmark categories in spring 2009, by cohort and key demographic categories.

Table 4-9
Spring 2009 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohorts 1 and 2, by Key Demographic Categories

Demographic Category	N	Percentage of Students with Spring 2009 Instructional Support Recommendations		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Cohort 1				
American Indian	887	16%	23%	61%
Hispanic	127	16%	17%	68%
White	1,751	10%	16%	75%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	1,167	7%	13%	81%
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	1,654	16%	22%	63%
Not Eligible for Special Education	2,608	10%	18%	73%
Eligible for Special Education	213	39%	22%	40%
Cohort 2				
American Indian	531	11%	23%	66%
Hispanic	32	22%	19%	59%
White	1,070	10%	20%	71%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	746	8%	17%	74%
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	917	12%	24%	64%
Not Eligible for Special Education	1,530	8%	20%	72%
Eligible for Special Education	133	39%	28%	33%

- White students were more likely to be at benchmark than American Indian and Hispanic students. In cohort 1, higher proportions of Hispanic students attained benchmark than did American Indian students; in cohort 2 higher proportions of American Indian students attained benchmark than did Hispanic students.
- Students not eligible for free/reduced-price lunch were more likely to be at benchmark than those who were eligible.
- Students not eligible for Special Education were more likely to be at benchmark than those who were eligible. About one-third of Special Education students attained benchmark in spring 2009.

Achievement Gap Analysis

Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT) are administered to all Montana students in grades 3–8 and 10 in Reading and Mathematics and in grades 4, 8, and 10 in Science as part of the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System as a requirement of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The CRTs have been administered to students in grades 4, 8, and 10 annually in the spring since the 2003–2004 school year; they have been administered to students in grades 3–8, and 10 annually in the spring since the 2005–2006 school year. Results on the CRT place students into one of four categories: novice, nearing proficient, proficient, and advanced.

Analysis of the CRT reading data allows the evaluation to compare the performance of students at Reading First schools against all non-Reading First schools in the state of Montana.[3] Although the design of the evaluation means that it cannot make claims about causation, the question that this analysis addresses is—are Reading First schools closing the achievement gap with other Montana schools?

To address this question, the evaluation explored differences between the percentage of students in the novice and nearing proficient categories and the proficient and advanced categories for the two groups of students, over time. If differences existed, and those differences became smaller over time, the achievement of the students in the Reading First schools was essentially becoming more like the achievement of the students in the non-Reading First schools—the Reading First schools were becoming more like non-Reading First schools.

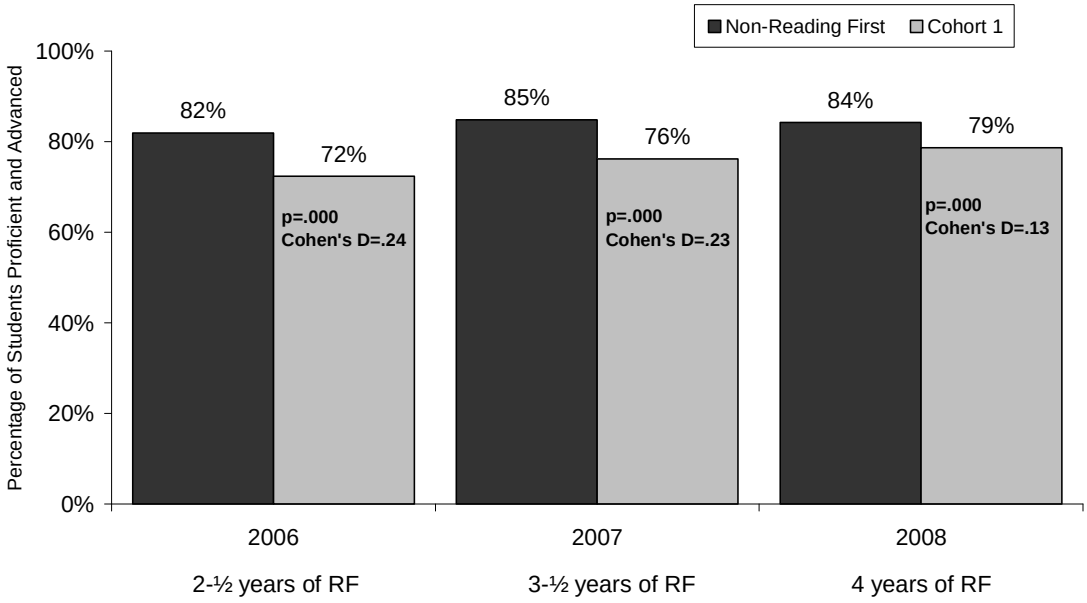
To add more information about these differences, effect size analyses are conducted. An effect size is an index that measures the magnitude of the relationship between two variables in a standardized manner. In the analyses of the CRT, Cohen's *d*, an effect size measure, was used to gage the relative magnitude of the difference between one group's achievement and another's (Kotrlik & Williams, 2003). Descriptors for interpreting Cohen's *d* are generally as follows: 0.20 is a small effect size, 0.50 is a medium effect size, and 0.80 is a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). This analysis shows the relative size of the difference between Reading First and non-Reading First schools, and how it changed over time. If schools in the Reading First program are closing the gap, a *decrease in the effect size would be witnessed over time*, as the achievement of students from these schools and non-Reading First schools becomes more similar.

The following presents results for third-grade students in cohort 1 and cohort 2. Please note that cohort 2 schools are excluded from the non-Reading First schools in cohort 1 analyses.

Figures 4-15 and 4-16 show that the achievement gap between third-grade students in Reading First and non-Reading First schools decreased in both cohorts.

[3] Two analyses were actually conducted. The first, presented here, compared the performance of the students in the Reading First schools to all of the students in the non-Reading First schools in the state. The second compared the performance of the students in the Reading First schools to all of the students in Title I, non-Reading First schools. The results of these two analyses were similar. Therefore, results are presented for the first analysis only. Appendix E contains the figures from the second analysis.

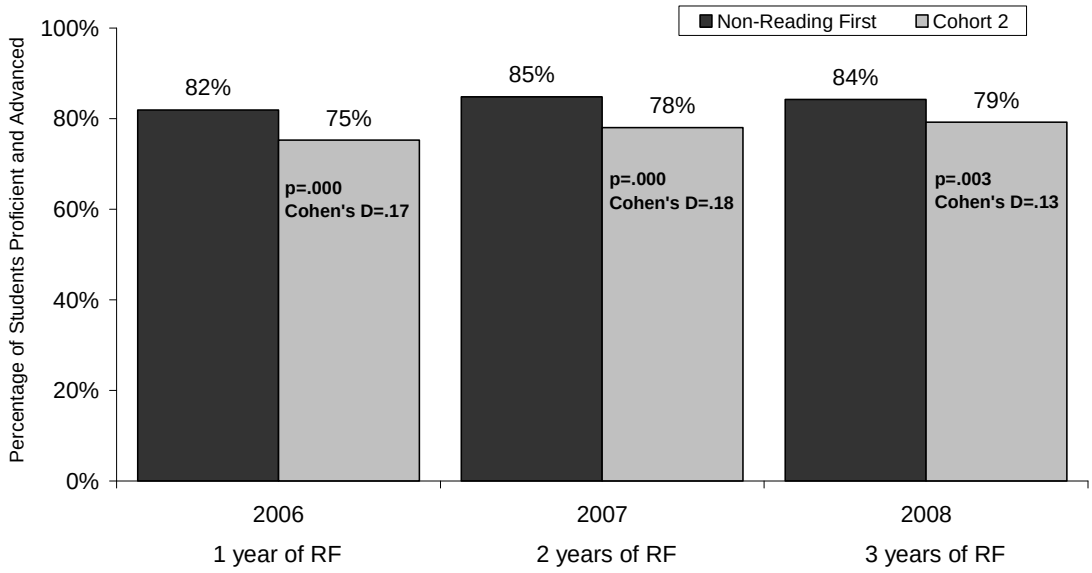
Figure 4-15



Third-Grade Students in the Proficient and Advanced Categories on the CRT—Non-Reading First and Cohort 1

Figure 4-15 shows that the achievement gap between cohort 1 third-grade students in Reading First and non-Reading First schools decreased. However, as the CRTs were not administered to third-grade students prior to 2005–2006, there is not a true baseline to compare against; the third grade students tested in spring 2006 had participated in over two full years of Reading First. Regardless, in spring 2006 there was a 10 percentage point difference between the performances of both groups on the CRT; by 2008 that gap had shrunk to six percentage points. While the differences between the groups' performance remained statistically significant (p=.000), the magnitude of that difference shrank, as evidenced by decreasing effect sizes from .24 in 2006 to .13 in 2008.

Figure 4-16



Third-Grade Students in the Proficient and Advanced Categories on the CRT—Non-Reading First and Cohort 2

Figure 4-16 shows that the achievement gap between cohort 2 third-grade students in Reading First and non-Reading First schools decreased. However, as the CRTs were not administered in 2004–2005 to third grade students, there is not a true baseline to compare against; the third grade students tested in spring 2006 had participated in one full year of Reading First. Regardless, in spring 2006 there was a seven percentage point difference between the performances of both groups on the CRT, by 2008 that gap had shrunk to five percentage points. While the differences between the groups' performance remained significant, the magnitude of that difference shrank, as evidenced by decreasing effect sizes from .17 in 2006 to .13 in 2008.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Montana Reading First was a clear success across a number of areas. Staff members in the state and in the schools developed their capacity to implement a reform program. Areas of challenge provide opportunity for continued growth.

Increased Student Achievement

Kindergarten through third-grade students benefited from the instruction they received under Reading First as evidenced by higher percentages of students reading at grade level and smaller proportions of students being categorized as struggling readers. These trends existed at every grade-level but were definitely more pronounced in kindergarten and first grade. American Indian, students living in poverty, and students eligible for Special Education services were more likely to read at benchmark in their final year of Reading First than they were in the first. Improvements in reading skills impacted statewide reading results as the achievement gap between third-grade students in Reading First and non-Reading First schools decreased from spring 2006 to spring 2009.

Increased State Capacity and Expertise

Montana Reading First staff members developed their capacity and expertise in multiple areas. Over time, they developed their ability to provide multi-faceted professional development and technical assistance in a variety of content areas, to a variety of participants, and in a variety of settings. This provided staff members in Montana Reading First schools access to up-to-date research and practices that would have been difficult for them to obtain in the absence of Reading First.

Montana Reading First staff members valued data from a variety of sources; used it on a continuous basis; and modeled that to staff members in Montana Reading First schools. These data sources included student assessment data from Montana Reading First schools, student assessment data from Reading First schools in other states, and formative and summative data from the annual evaluation of the project. Use of these data sources contributed to improved capacity to facilitate the implementation of Montana Reading First in cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools.

Montana Reading First staff members were flexible to best address the needs of schools. They asked for opinions and took them into account in planning; they changed approaches when necessary; and they continued to devote time to strengthening the implementation of Montana Reading First in struggling cohort 1 schools, while simultaneously initiating the implementation of Montana Reading First in cohort 2 schools.

Increased Local Capacity

Montana Reading First staff members equipped more than 33 principals, 33 coaches, and countless teachers with the skills they will need to maintain Reading First's instructional changes beyond the life of the grant. While not all of these staff members will remain in their schools, or in their position, capacity was built to provide teachers (both returning and new) with continued

access to assistance to deliver research-based, data-driven reading instruction. Furthermore, schools have built capacity to identify areas of improvement, problem solve, and implement changes to address these gaps. Successful practices at the school-level in the areas of principals' instructional leadership, reading assessment systems, Reading Leadership Teams, and grade-level teams will contribute to their continued ability to do so.

Difficulty Moving All Students

Not all students experienced success under Montana Reading First. While some schools were successful at improving the reading skills of the least capable readers, not all students were reading at grade level by spring of any school year, and not all students who read at grade level maintained their ability to do so within and across school years. Students in second and third grade continued to struggle with fluency. Native Americans, students living in poverty, and students eligible for Special Education services achieved success, but at lower rates than their peers.

Uneven Implementation

Not all schools were successful implementing all of the components of Montana Reading First. While the majority of schools were able to adapt to the changes required by the grant, three schools were discontinued for non-compliance. Furthermore, implementation varied between and among cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools. Schools successfully implemented varied components of Montana Reading First and some did so with more components than others. The degree to which schools successfully implemented Montana Reading First with full and reduced funding will impact the extent to which Montana Reading First is sustained in the years ahead.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MONTANA READING FIRST SURVEY SUMMARY
COHORT 1

Coach Survey
Teacher Survey
Principal Survey

MONTANA READING FIRST
COACH SURVEY 2009
COHORT 1

This survey is part of the external evaluation of Montana Reading First being conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every coach involved in Montana Reading First.** Please be candid in your answers. There are no right or wrong responses. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other Reading First coaches.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2008–2009)**.

---

1. How frequently did you attend Reading First professional development or state meetings this year?
   - -- Did not attend (skip to Question 5)
   - -- Once
   - 53% Twice
   - 40% Three times
   - 7% Four times
   - -- Five or more times

If you attended any Reading First training, please answer the following questions.

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. the quality of training in coaching methods that I received through Reading First this year.	--	--	--	27%	73%
3. the amount of training in coaching methods that I received through Reading First this year.	--	--	13%	47%	40%
4. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	-- Too much			100% Too little	

5. How many visits did your school receive from state project staff (including State Reading Specialists) this year?
   - -- None (skip to Question 8)
   - 6% One
   - 24% Two
   - 41% Three
   - 18% Four
   - 12% Five or more

---

6. The number of visits from state project staff was:
--Too many
24% Too few
77% Just right

7. How helpful were visits from state project staff (including State Reading Specialists)?
-- Not at all helpful
6% Somewhat helpful
24% Helpful
71% Very helpful
-- Did not take place

Please indicate the number of minutes (do not round).

Grade	How many minutes long is the reading block?	Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?
8. Half-day Kindergarten	Range: -- Average: --	-- Yes -- No
9. Full-day Kindergarten	Range: 60 to 180 Average: 98	80% Yes 20% No
10. First	Range: 90 to 150 Average: 96	100% Yes -- No
11. Second	Range: 90 to 150 Average: 96	100% Yes -- No
12. Third	Range 90-135 Average 95	100% Yes -- No

13. Our K-3 teachers continue to teach from the same core reading program(s) we used last year.
88% Yes
12% No, please explain why:

14. Fidelity to the core program is ____ than last year.
12% More strict
88% About the same
-- Less strict
-- Not applicable (e.g. adopted new core)

15. Does your school have a Reading Leadership Team?
100% Yes
-- No

16. How often did your Reading Leadership Team meet, on average? ***(select one)***
-- Never
6% Once or a few times a year
29% Every other month
47% Once a month
12% Every other week
6% Once a week or more often

17. Did your school administer the benchmark DIBELS assessment in the fall, winter, and spring?

94% Yes, to all K-3 students
6% Yes, to some K-3 students
-- No

18. In about what proportion of K-3 classrooms at your school would you say that regular progress monitoring is implemented?

82% All classrooms
18% Nearly all classrooms
-- About three-quarters of classrooms
-- About half of classrooms
-- About a quarter of classrooms
-- Fewer than a quarter of classrooms
-- No classrooms

19. How many students will have received **intensive reading interventions** this year (from September 2008 to June 2009)?
"Intensive interventions" occur outside the reading block, at least two hours per week for at least six weeks. Count any individual student only once, even if he/she has received reading interventions for more than one session or term. If you do not have exact numbers, please provide the best estimate that you can. (bubble in number, up to 999)

Range: 3 to 172 Average: 38

20. How many other students *(not counted in the previous question)* will have received **less intensive reading interventions** (outside the reading block, less than two hours per week and/or less than six weeks)? (bubble in number, up to 999)

Range: 0 to 200 Average: 50

To what percentage of students in each DIBELS grouping is your school able to provide **reading** interventions?

21. Intensive *(bubble in percentage)*
Range: 5% to 100% Average: 92%

22. Strategic *(bubble in percentage)*
Range: 0% to 100% Average: 73 %

To what degree are the following items challenges to providing reading interventions to all students?	Not a challenge	Sometimes a challenge	Often a challenge	Always a challenge
23. Insufficient staffing	24%	29%	18%	29%
24. Lack of training for staff	35%	47%	18%	--
25. Lack of student transportation (to after or before school sessions)	69%	19%	6%	6%
26. Not enough space within the building	29%	35%	29%	6%
27. Teacher resistance	65%	35%	--	--
28. Lack of principal support	82%	18%	--	--
29. Parent resistance	59%	41%	--	--
30. Insufficient data	88%	12%	--	--
31. Lack of materials	71%	24%	6%	--
32. Student absences	6%	18%	65%	12%
33. Scheduling conflicts	12%	35%	53%	--
34. Other	60%	20%	20%	--

35. This year we have provided **reading** interventions to
    - 18% Substantially more students than last year
    - 18% Slightly more students than last year
    - 47% About the same number of students as last year
    - 6% Slightly fewer students than last year
    - 12% Substantially fewer students than last year

36. What is the largest number of intensive students that work at one time with a **reading** intervention provider? (bubble in number, up to 99)
    Range: 2 to 16 Average: 6

37. As a reading coach, how many hours a week do you work at this job, on average?

    Range: 9 to 50 Average: 38

38. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following tasks?

Coordinating or administering reading assessments
Range: 0% to 25% Average: 11%

Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
Range: 0% to 13% Average: 7%

Reviewing and using reading assessment data
Range: 2% to 22% Average: 8%

Attending professional development
Range: 0% to 22% Average: 4%

Planning for and attending Reading Leadership Team and grade-level meetings
Range: 2% to 22% Average: 8%

Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
Range: 2% to 22% Average: 7%

Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
Range: 12% to 38% Average: 24%

Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
Range: 0% to 36% Average: 10%

Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6
Range: 0% to 9% Average: 3%

Planning interventions
Range: 0% to 13% Average: 5%

Providing interventions directly to students
Range: 0% to 10% Average: 2%

Covering or subbing for teachers
Range: 0% to 4% Average: 1%

Paperwork
Range: 0% to 10% Average: 5%

Bus/recess duty
Range: 0% to 12% Average: 3%

Other: _____
Range: 0% to 13% Average: 2%

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
39. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at my school.	--	7%	--	33%	60%
40. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	--	--	--	7%	93%
41. I am fully confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of our assessment team thoroughly understand the administration and scoring of the DIBELS.	--	--	--	27%	73%
42. My school's **reading** intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	--	7%	7%	27%	60%
43. My school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	--	7%	20%	40%	33%
44. My school has a collaborative culture.	--	7%	--	47%	47%

45. What is your position at this school?
    - 12% Part-time coach, only
    - 65% Full-time coach, only
    - 12% I have coaching and teaching responsibilities
    - 12% Principal
    - -- Assistant principal

46. How many years have you been coach at this school (including this year)? [fill in #]
    Range: 2 to 30 Average: 7

47. How many total years coaching experience do you have (including this year)? [fill in #]
    Range: 2 to 10 Average: 6

48. How many years teaching experience do you have (prior to becoming a coach)?
    Range: 6 to 26 Average: 19

49. What are your educational credentials? (select as many as apply)
    - 53% Bachelor's degree
    - 6% Traditional Certification
    - -- Emergency Certification
    - 24% Reading certification
    - 24% Master's degree in reading
    - 24% Master's degree in area of education other than reading
    - -- Master's degree in discipline other than education
    - -- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

50. Have you earned any additional degree or certification while working as a coach? (select as many as apply).
    - -- Bachelor's degree
    - -- Traditional Certification
    - -- Emergency Certification
    - -- Reading Certification
    - 12% Master's degree in reading
    - 12% Master's degree in area of education other than reading
    - -- Master's degree in discipline other than education
    - -- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

51. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting*

Centerville
Charlo
Crow Agency
Dixon
Eastgate
Hardin Intermediate
Hardin Primary
Hays/Lodge Pole
Kennedy
KW Harvey
Libby
Newman
Pablo
Ponderosa
Radley
Warren
Whittier

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
TEACHER SURVEY 2009
COHORT 1

This survey is part of the external evaluation of Montana Reading First being conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every teacher involved in Montana Reading First.** Please be candid in your answers. There are no right or wrong responses. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other Reading First teachers.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2008–2009)**.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. **Please return it to your reading coach, sealed in the envelope provided.** If there is no reading coach at your school, please return it to your principal, sealed in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your assistance.

Please indicate the frequency with which the following activities took place during this school year (2008–2009).

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
1. the principal observe your classroom during the reading block?	--	15%	17%	20%	32%	16%
2. the principal provide you with feedback on your instruction?	5%	28%	22%	24%	16%	4%
3. the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	6%	20%	20%	29%	21%	5%
4. the reading coach provide you with feedback on your instruction?	12%	26%	25%	24%	11%	1%
5. you attend a grade-level reading meeting?	1%	4%	24%	53%	18%	--
6. you look at reading assessment data?	--	4%	17%	32%	31%	16%
7. you need to use the 90-minute reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks? (i.e. writing, science, math, field trips, administrative tasks)	63%	29%	3%	1%	1%	3%

8. This year, the **amount** of professional development I received in reading was…
   - 10% Much more than last year
   - 10% Slightly more than last year
   - 43% About the same as last year
   - 18% Slightly less than last year
   - 19% Much less than last year

9. This year, the **quality** of professional development I received in reading was…
   - 11% Much better than last year
   - 12% Slightly better than last year
   - 64% About the same as last year
   - 8% Slightly worse than last year
   - 6% Much worse than last year

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
10. grouping students into small-instructional groups within my classroom.	2%	2%	12%	29%	56%	8%
11. communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs.	1%	2%	12%	37%	49%	1%
12. looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	3%	8%	20%	35%	35%	4%
13. identifying which students need interventions.	--	1%	4%	17%	78%	3%

14. This year, I used the core reading program during the reading block:
   - 19% More than last year
   - 77% About the same as last year
   - 4% Less than last year

15. This year, I used the templates during the reading block:
   - 24% More than last year
   - 49% About the same amount as last year
   - 9% Less than last year
   - 19% I don't use the templates

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. Overall, the professional development I received in reading was ongoing and intensive.	3%	15%	35%	42%	5%
17. Overall, the professional development I received in reading focused on what happens in the classroom.	2%	10%	20%	60%	9%
18. Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	3%	8%	14%	50%	24%
19. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	1%	11%	20%	48%	20%
20. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	3%	10%	25%	39%	24%
21. Our school has an organized system for administering Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	1%	1%	2%	37%	59%
22. Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS) with teachers.	--	2%	2%	51%	45%
23. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	6%	9%	19%	41%	25%
24. Our school's reading intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	2%	6%	11%	47%	34%
25. Our school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	7%	12%	12%	39%	29%
26. Our school has a collaborative culture.	2%	4%	19%	48%	27%

27. What is your primary teaching role this year? *(select one)*

85% Regular classroom teacher

Specialist (select one)

-- Speech/language

9% Language arts/reading (e.g., Title I, reading specialist)

1% Library

3% Special education

1% ESL/bilingual

1% Paraprofessional

-- I do not work directly with students

28. This year, which grade(s) do you teach during the reading block? For example, you might teach first- and second-grade students. (select all that apply).
    - 25% Grade K
    - 32% Grade 1
    - 29% Grade 2
    - 24% Grade 3
    - 3% Other
    - 1% I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.

29. How many years teaching experience do you have? (bubble in number)
    Range: 1 to 44 Average: 15

30. How many years have you worked at this school? (bubble in number)
    Range: 1 to 38 Average: 10

31. What are your educational credentials? *(select as many as apply)*
    - 77% Bachelor's degree
    - 13% Traditional teacher certification
    - 1% Emergency teacher certification
    - 6% Reading certification
    - Master's degree
        - 11% In reading
        - 18% In area of education other than reading
        - 18% In discipline other than education
    - 1% Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

32. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

Centerville	Libby
Charlo	Newman
Crow Agency	Pablo
Dixon	Ponderosa
Eastgate	Warren
Hardin Intermediate	Whittier
Hardin Primary	

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
PRINCIPAL SURVEY 2009
COHORT 1

This survey is part of the external evaluation of Montana Reading First being conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every principal involved in Montana Reading First.** There are no right or wrong responses. Please be candid in your answers. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from the other Reading First schools.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2008–2009)**.

Thank you for your assistance.

---

1. How frequently did you attend Reading First professional development or state meetings this year?
   Did not attend (skip to Question 5)
   - 12% Once
   - 47% Twice
   - 35% Three times
   - -- Four times
   - 6% Five or more times

If you attended any Reading First training, please answer the following questions.

I am very pleased with…	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
2. the quality of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	6%	--	44%	50%
3. the amount of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	6%	--	44%	50%
4. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	-- Too much			100% Too little	

Please indicate the frequency with which you use reading assessment results.

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
5. communicating with teachers about their students.	--	--	12%	35%	53%	--
6. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	--	6%	12%	41%	41%	--
7. looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	--	6%	--	12%	82%	--

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with the reading program in our school.	47%	29%	18%	6%	--
9. Overcoming teacher resistance to continuing the Reading First program has been a challenge for me.	31%	31%	19%	19%	--
10. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	--	--	6%	24%	71%
11. Our district supports the continuation of Reading First practices in our school.	--	6%	12%	18%	65%
12. Our school has an organized system for administering Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	--	--	--	12%	88%
13. Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	--	--	--	29%	71%

Please indicate if the following Reading First components were adequately or not adequately funded in your school this year.

	Adequately Funded	Not Adequately Funded
14. Reading Leadership Team	88%	12%
15. Grade-level meetings	94%	6%
16. Core program	82%	18%
17. DIBELS	94%	6%
18. Reading coach	65%	35%
19. Professional development in reading	77%	24%
20. Interventions	82%	18%

21. How many K-3 teachers are on your staff this year? *[fill in #, 0 to 99]*
    Range: 4 to 19 Average: 10

22. Of those teachers, how many were new to the school this year? *[fill in #, 0 to 99]*
    Range: 0 to 4 Average: 1

23. How many years have you been principal at this school? *[fill in #, 0 to 99]*
    Range: 1 to 15 Average: 5

24. How many total years of principal experience do you have including this year? *[fill in #, 0 to 99]*
    Range: 1 to 23 Average: 12

25. Did your school make AYP based on 2007–2008 tests?
    - 29% Yes
    - 47% No, because of <u>both</u> math and reading scores
    - -- No, because of reading score
    - 18% No, because of math score
    - 6% No, because other reasons

26. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

    Centerville
    Charlo
    Crow Agency
    Dixon
    Eastgate
    Hardin Intermediate
    Hardin Primary
    Libby
    Longfellow
    Newman
    Pablo
    Ponderosa
    Radley
    Warren
    Whittier

Thank you for your support of the evaluation

APPENDIX B

MONTANA READING FIRST SURVEY SUMMARY
COHORT 2

Coach Survey
Teacher Survey
Principal Survey

education northwest
CREATING STRONG SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

MONTANA READING FIRST
COACH SURVEY 2009
COHORT 2

This survey is part of the external evaluation of Montana Reading First being conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every coach involved in Montana Reading First.** Please be candid in your answers. There are no right or wrong responses. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other Reading First coaches.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2008–2009)**.

---

1. How frequently did you attend Reading First professional development or state meetings this year?
   - 9% Did not attend (skip to Question 5)
   - -- Once
   - 18% Twice
   - 64% Three times
   - 9% Four times
   - -- Five or more times

If you attended any Reading First training, please answer the following questions.

I am very pleased with…	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
2. the quality of training in coaching methods that I received through Reading First this year.	--	--	--	40%	60%
3. the amount of training in coaching methods that I received through Reading First this year.	--	--	--	50%	50%
4. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	-- Too much			-- Too little	

5. How many visits did your school receive from state project staff (including State Reading Specialists) this year?
   -- None (skip to Question 8)
   9% One
   36% Two
   18% Three
   9% Four
   27% Five or more

6. The number of visits from state project staff was:
   -- Too many
   36% Too few
   64% Just right

7. How helpful were visits from state project staff (including State Reading Specialists)?
   -- Not at all helpful
   36% Somewhat helpful
   18% Helpful
   46% Very helpful
   -- Did not take place

Please indicate the number of minutes (do not round).

Grade	How many minutes long is the reading block?	Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?
8. Half-day Kindergarten	Range: 60-60 Average: 60	-- Yes 100% No
9. Full-day Kindergarten	Range: 60 to 135 Average: 91	70% Yes 30% No
10. First	Range: 90 to 135 Average: 97	100% Yes -- No
11. Second	Range: 90 to 135 Average: 97	100% Yes -- No
12. Third	Range: 90-1120 Average: 93	100% Yes -- No

13. Our K-3 teachers continue to teach from the same core reading program(s) we used last year.
   100% Yes
   -- No, please explain why:

14. Fidelity to the core program is ____ than last year.
   -- More strict
   100% About the same
   -- Less strict
   -- Not applicable (e.g. adopted new core)

15. Does your school have a Reading Leadership Team?
    - 91% Yes
    - 9% No

16. How often did your Reading Leadership Team meet, on average? ***(select one)***
    - 9% Never
    - 9% Once or a few times a year
    - 18% Every other month
    - 46% Once a month
    - 18% Every other week
    - -- Once a week or more often

17. Did your school administer the benchmark DIBELS assessment in the fall, winter, and spring?
    - 100% Yes, to all K-3 students
    - -- Yes, to some K-3 students
    - -- No

18. In about what proportion of K-3 classrooms at your school would you say that regular progress monitoring is implemented?
    - 100% All classrooms
    - -- Nearly all classrooms
    - -- About three-quarters of classrooms
    - -- About half of classrooms
    - -- About a quarter of classrooms
    - -- Fewer than a quarter of classrooms
    - -- No classrooms

19. How many students will have received **intensive reading interventions** this year (from September 2008 to June 2009)?

"Intensive interventions" occur outside the reading block, <u>at least two hours per week for at least six weeks</u>. Count any individual student only once, even if he/she has received reading interventions for more than one session or term. If you do not have exact numbers, please provide the best estimate that you can. (bubble in number, up to 999)

Range: 7 to 135 Average: 52

20. How many other students *(not counted in the previous question)* will have received **less intensive reading interventions** (outside the reading block, less than two hours per week and/or less than six weeks)? (bubble in number, up to 999)

Range: 0 to 60 Average: 21

To what percentage of students in each DIBELS grouping is your school able to provide **reading** interventions?

21. Intensive *(bubble in percentage)*
    Range: 90% to 100% Average: 99%

22. Strategic *(bubble in percentage)*

    Range: 75% to 100% Average: 94 %

To what degree are the following items challenges to providing reading interventions to all students?	**Not a challenge**	**Sometimes a challenge**	**Often a challenge**	**Always a challenge**
23. Insufficient staffing	--	55%	36%	9%
24. Lack of training for staff	36%	46%	18%	--
25. Lack of student transportation (to after or before school sessions)	82%	9%	9%	--
26. Not enough space within the building	36%	55%	--	9%
27. Teacher resistance	36%	46%	18%	--
28. Lack of principal support	73%	9%	--	18%
29. Parent resistance	46%	46%	--	9%
30. Insufficient data	82%	18%	--	--
31. Lack of materials	64%	36%	--	--
32. Student absences	9%	--	73%	18%
33. Scheduling conflicts	18%	46%	36%	--
34. Other	100%	--	--	--

35. This year we have provided reading interventions to
    - 9% Substantially more students than last year
    - 9% Slightly more students than last year
    - 73% About the same number of students as last year
    - 9% Slightly fewer students than last year
    - -- Substantially fewer students than last year

36. What is the largest number of intensive students that work at one time with a reading intervention provider? (bubble in number, up to 99)
    Range: 2 to 25 Average: 8

37. As a reading coach, how many hours a week do you work at this job, on average?
    Range: 7 to 52 Average: 40

38. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following tasks?

Coordinating or administering reading assessments
Range: 4% to 14% Average: 7%

Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
Range: 4% to 14% Average: 7%

Reviewing and using reading assessment data
Range: 0% to 14% Average: 6%

Attending professional development
Range: 0% to 8% Average: 2%

Planning for and attending Reading Leadership Team and grade-level meetings
Range: 0% to 15% Average: 9%

Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
Range: 0% to 25% Average: 6%

Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
Range: 3% to 29% Average: 18%

Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
Range: 0% to 20% Average: 8%

Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6
Range: 0% to 8% Average: 3%

Planning interventions
Range: 2% to 14% Average: 6%

Providing interventions directly to students
Range: 0% to 51% Average: 18%

Covering or subbing for teachers
Range: 0% to 5% Average: 2%

Paperwork
Range: 0% to 12% Average: 4%

Bus/recess duty
Range: 0% to 10% Average: 2%

Other: _____
Range: 0% to 14% Average: 2%

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
39. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at my school.	--	--	--	40%	60%
40. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	--	10%	--	--	90%
41. I am fully confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of our assessment team thoroughly understand the administration and scoring of the DIBELS.	--	--	--	20%	80%
42. My school's **reading** intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	--	10%	--	60%	30%
43. My school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	--	--	--	40%	60%
44. My school has a collaborative culture.	--	10%	--	30%	60%

45. What is your position at this school?
    - 9% Part-time coach, only
    - 46% Full-time coach, only
    - 46% I have coaching and teaching responsibilities
    - -- Principal
    - -- Assistant principal

46. How many years have you been coach at this school (including this year)? [fill in #]
    Range: 1 to 11 Average: 4

47. How many total years coaching experience do you have (including this year)? [fill in #]
    Range: 1 to 8 Average: 4

48. How many years teaching experience do you have (prior to becoming a coach)?
    Range: 2 to 35 Average: 14

49. What are your educational credentials? (select as many as apply)
    - 91% Bachelor's degree
    - 27% Traditional Certification
    - -- Emergency Certification
    - 64% Reading certification
    - 36% Master's degree in reading
    - 18% Master's degree in area of education other than reading
    - -- Master's degree in discipline other than education
    - -- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

50. Have you earned any additional degree or certification while working as a coach? (select as many as apply).

--	Bachelor's degree
--	Traditional Certification
--	Emergency Certification
--	Reading certification
18%	Master's degree in reading
--	Master's degree in area of education other than reading
--	Master's degree in discipline other than education
--	Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

51. At which school do you work? Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.

Box Elder
East Evergreen
East Glacier Park
Frazer
Harlem
Heart Butte
Lakeside/Somers
Morningside
Rocky Boy
Stevensville
West (Butte)

Thank you for your support of the evaluation

MONTANA READING FIRST
TEACHER SURVEY 2009
COHORT 2

This survey is part of the external evaluation of Montana Reading First being conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every teacher involved in Montana Reading First.** Please be candid in your answers. There are no right or wrong responses. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other Reading First teachers.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2008–2009)**.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. **Please return it to your reading coach, sealed in the envelope provided.** If there is no reading coach at your school, please return it to your principal, sealed in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your assistance.

Please indicate the frequency with which the following activities took place during this school year (2008–2009).

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
1. the principal observe your classroom during the reading block?	3%	36%	24%	19%	16%	2%
2. the principal provide you with feedback on your instruction?	20%	52%	16%	9%	2%	2%
3. the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	9%	16%	15%	31%	20%	10%
4. the reading coach provide you with feedback on your instruction?	10%	29%	21%	28%	9%	3%
5. you attend a grade-level reading meeting?	2%	7%	26%	28%	36%	2%
6. you look at reading assessment data?	--	12%	17%	36%	27%	9%
7. you need to use the 90-minute reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks? (i.e. writing, science, math, field trips, administrative tasks)	59%	30%	4%	4%	--	4%

8. This year, the amount of professional development I received in reading was…

11% Much more than last year
7% Slightly more than last year
36% About the same as last year
10% Slightly less than last year
36% Much less than last year

9. This year, the **quality** of professional development I received in reading was…

13% Much better than last year
7% Slightly better than last year
58% About the same as last year
11% Slightly worse than last year
12% Much worse than last year

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
10. grouping students into small-instructional groups within my classroom.	1%	2%	18%	38%	41%	3%
11. communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs.	--	1%	11%	41%	47%	1%
12. looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	2%	6%	31%	26%	36%	5%
13. identifying which students need interventions.	--	2%	2%	24%	72%	2%

14. This year, I used the core reading program during the reading block:

13% More than last year
86% About the same as last year
1% Less than last year

15. This year, I used the templates during the reading block:

14% More than last year
62% About the same amount as last year
14% Less than last year
10% I don't use the templates

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. Overall, the professional development I received in reading was ongoing and intensive.	9%	16%	27%	46%	3%
17. Overall, the professional development I received in reading focused on what happens in the classroom.	4%	10%	28%	56%	3%
18. Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	3%	9%	18%	61%	10%
19. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	2%	10%	17%	58%	14%
20. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	4%	4%	19%	50%	14%
21. Our school has an organized system for administering Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	1%	3%	4%	57%	35%
22. Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS) with teachers.	1%	3%	5%	61%	29%
23. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	5%	8%	17%	54%	17%
24. Our school's reading intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	10%	8%	17%	52%	14%
25. Our school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	7%	16%	10%	58%	10%
26. Our school has a collaborative culture.	3%	11%	17%	55%	14%

27. What is your primary teaching role this year? (select one)

94% Regular classroom teacher
Specialist (select one)
-- Speech/language
3% Language arts/reading (e.g., Title I, reading specialist)
-- Library
3% Special education
-- ESL/bilingual
-- Paraprofessional
-- I do not work directly with students

28. This year, which grade(s) do you teach during the reading block? For example, you might teach first- and second-grade students. (select all that apply).
    - 26% Grade K
    - 27% Grade 1
    - 26% Grade 2
    - 24% Grade 3
    - 5% Other
    - 1% I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.

29. How many years teaching experience do you have? (bubble in number)
    Range: 1 to 37 Average: 15
30. How many years have you worked at this school? (bubble in number)
    Range: 1 to 34 Average: 12

31. What are your educational credentials? *(select as many as apply)*
    - 84% Bachelor's degree
    - 11% Traditional teacher certification
    - 3% Emergency teacher certification
    - 18% Reading certification
    - Master's degree
        - 6% In reading
        - 22% In area of education other than reading
        - -- In discipline other than education
    - -- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

32. At which school do you work? Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.

    Box Elder
    East Evergreen
    East Glacier Park
    Frazer
    Harlem
    Heart Butte
    Lakeside/Somers
    Morningside
    Rocky Boy
    Stevensville
    West (Butte

Thank you for your support of the evaluation

MONTANA READING FIRST
PRINCIPAL SURVEY 2009
COHORT 2

This survey is part of the external evaluation of Montana Reading First being conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every principal involved in Montana Reading First.** There are no right or wrong responses. Please be candid in your answers. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from the other Reading First schools.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2008–2009)**.

Thank you for your assistance.

---

1. How frequently did you attend Reading First professional development or state meetings this year?
   Did not attend (skip to Question 5)
   - 8% Did not attend
   - 25% Once
   - 33% Twice
   - 33% Three times
   - -- Four times
   - -- Five or more times

If you attended any Reading First training, please answer the following questions.

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. the quality of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	8%	17%	8%	42%	25%
3. the amount of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	8%	17%	25%	33%	17%
4. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	25% Too much		75% Too little		

Please indicate the frequency with which you use reading assessment results.

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
5. communicating with teachers about their students.	9%	--	9%	36%	46%	
6. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	9%	--	18%	46%	27%	
7. looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	8%	--	--	42%	50%	

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with the reading program in our school.	75%	17%	8%	--	--
9. Overcoming teacher resistance to continuing the Reading First program has been a challenge for me.	42%	42%	--	17%	--
10. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	17%	--	--	33%	50%
11. Our district supports the continuation of Reading First practices in our school.	17%	--	--	33%	50%
12. Our school has an organized system for administering Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	17%	--	--	17%	67%
13. Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	17%	--	8%	25%	50%

Please indicate if the following Reading First components were adequately or not adequately funded in your school this year.

	Adequately Funded	Not Adequately Funded
14. Reading Leadership Team	83%	17%
15. Grade-level meetings	83%	17%
16. Core program	92%	8%
17. DIBELS	100%	--
18. Reading coach	92%	8%
19. Professional development in reading	75%	25%
20. Interventions	75%	25%

21. How many K-3 teachers are on your staff this year? *[fill in #, 0 to 99]*
    Range: 2 to 17 Average: 10

22. Of those teachers, how many were new to the school this year? *[fill in #, 0 to 99]*
    Range: 0 to 22 Average: 3

23. How many years have you been principal at this school? *[fill in #, 0 to 99]*
    Range: 1 to 33 Average: 8

24. How many total years of principal experience do you have including this year? *[fill in #, 0 to 99]*
    Range: 1 to 44 Average: 13

25. Did your school make AYP based on 2007–2008 tests?
    - 67% Yes
    - 17% No, because of <u>both</u> math and reading scores
    - 8 No, because of reading score
    - -- No, because of math score
    - 8% No, because other reasons

26. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

    Box Elder
    Dodson
    East Evergreen
    East Glacier Park
    Frazer
    Harlem
    Stevensville
    Heart Butte
    Lakeside/Somers
    Morningside
    Rocky Boy
    Stevenson
    West (Butte)

Thank you for your support of the evaluation

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocols

Coach
Teacher
Principal
State Director Telephone Interview

Montana Reading First
Winter/Spring 2009 Interview Protocols

Reading Coach

Training and Technical Assistance

1. Were you reading coach at this school last year? If yes, compared to last year, were there any differences in the, overall, professional development offerings to coaches this year? If so, what were they? Has your participation in training changed since last year? How? Why?
2. Of the trainings you attended, what stands out as especially useful? Why?
3. What stands out as especially not useful? Why?
4. Thinking about support and technical assistance provided by the Reading First project staff (Debbie Hunsaker and the state reading specialists), what have you received? How useful has it been?
5. Do you have any recommendations for future Reading First-related training and/or technical assistance?

Implementation

6. Compared to last year, have there been any changes in:
   a) Reading blocks in first through third grade, are they still 90-minutes and uninterrupted? What about full-day and half-day K? If yes, what is different? Why?
   b) The core reading program publisher and teacher fidelity? If yes, what is different and why? If a new core was adopted, what process was used?
   c) The time you devote to coaching and the activities you most frequently engage in? If yes, what is different? Why?
   d) The frequency of meeting, the membership of, and content addressed by the Reading Leadership Team? If yes, what is different? Why?
   e) The frequency of meeting, the membership of, and content addressed at grade-level meetings? It yes, what is different? Why?
   f) Your school's use of data—who is responsible for training and administering benchmark and progress monitoring DIBELS assessments; how those data are analyzed; and ultimately used by you, the principal, and teachers? If yes, what is different? Why?
   g) The professional development provided to K-3 teachers in reading (this can include the site-based training in summer 2008, teacher attendance at the Montana Reading Institute, school/district provided training for new K-3 teachers, in-service reading training, Knowledge Box and study groups)? If yes, what is different? Why?
   h) The provision of interventions to struggling readers (think about the number of students served, the level targeted for participation (strategic/intensive), group size, materials, and staffing and training)? If yes, what is different? Why?
   i) The frequency of K-3 teachers using templates during the reading block? If yes, what is different? Why?

Buy-in

7. To what extent has teacher buy-in to Reading First changed since last year? Why?
8. What about buy-in at the district level, has that changed? How so? Why?

Overall

9. What have been your school's biggest successes in implementing Reading First this year?
10. What have been your school's biggest challenges in implementing Reading First this year?
11. Is there anything else you think I should know about Reading First at your school this year?

Teachers

Training

1. Were you a teacher at this school last year? If yes, compared to last year, were there any differences in the, overall, reading-related professional development offerings to teachers this year (site-based training in summer 2008, attendance at the Montana Reading Institute, in-service reading training, Knowledge Box, and study groups)? If so, what were they? Has your participation in training changed since last year? How? Why?
2. Of the trainings you attended, what stands out as especially useful? Why?
3. What stands out as especially not useful? Why?
4. Do you have any recommendations for future Reading First-related training?

Implementation

5. Compared to last year, have there been any changes in:
   a. Your reading block, is it still 90-minutes long and uninterrupted? If no, what is different? Why?
   b. The core reading program you use and the extent to which you implement it with "fidelity"? If yes, what is different? Why? If a new core was adopted, what process was used?
   c. The frequency by which the principal observes your reading instruction and provides you with feedback? If yes, what is different? Why?
   d. The content and frequency of your work with the reading coach? If yes, what is different? Why?
   e. Are you a member of the Reading Leadership Team? If yes, has the frequency of meeting, the membership of, and content addressed by the Reading Leadership Team changed since last year? If yes, what is different? Why?
   f. The frequency of meeting, the membership of, and content addressed at grade-level meetings? It yes, what is different? Why?
   g. Your school's use of data—who is responsible for administering benchmark and progress monitoring DIBELS assessments; how those data are analyzed; and ultimately used by you, the principal, and coach? If yes, what is different? Why?
   h. The provision of interventions to struggling readers (think about the number of students served, the level targeted for participation (strategic/intensive), group size, materials, and staffing and training)? If yes, what is different? Why?
   i. The frequency by which you use templates during the reading block? If yes, what is different? Why?

Buy-in

6. To what extent has your buy-in to Reading First changed since last year? Why?

Overall

7. Is there anything else you think I should know about Reading First at your school this year?

Principal

Training and Technical Assistance

1. Were you principal at this school last year? If yes, compared to last year, were there any differences in the, overall, professional development offerings to principals this year? If so, what were they? Has your participation in training changed since last year? How? Why?
2. Of the trainings you attended, what stands out as especially useful? Why?
3. What stands out as especially not useful? Why?
4. Thinking about support and technical assistance provided by the Reading First project staff (Debbie Hunsaker and the state reading specialists), what have you received? How useful has it been?
5. Do you have any recommendations for future Reading First-related training and/or technical assistance?

Implementation

6. Compared to last year, have there been any changes in:
   b) Your process for and frequency of observing and providing feedback to K-3 teachers regarding their instruction in reading? If yes, what is different? Why?
   c) The frequency of meeting, membership of, and content addressed by the Reading Leadership Team? If yes, what is different? Why?
   d) The frequency of meeting, membership of, and content addressed at grade-level meetings? It yes, what is different? Why?
   e) The work of the reading coach, who she works with and what she is engaged in? If yes, what is different? Why?
   f) Your school's use of data—who is responsible for administering benchmark and progress monitoring DIBELS assessments; how those data are analyzed; and ultimately used by you, the reading coach, and teachers? If yes, what is different? Why?
   g) The professional development provided to K-3 teachers in reading (this can include the site-based training in summer 2008, teacher attendance at the Montana Reading Institute, school/district provided training for new K-3 teachers, in-service reading training, Knowledge Box, and study groups)? If yes, what is different? Why?
   h) The core reading program? If yes, what is different? Why? If a new core was adopted, what process was used?
   i) The provision of interventions to struggling readers (think about the number of students served, the level targeted for participation (strategic/intensive), group size, materials, and staffing and training)? If yes, what is different? Why?

Buy-in

7. To what extent has teacher buy-in to Reading First changed since last year? Why?
8. What about buy-in at the district level, has that changed? How so? Why?

Sustainability

9. What aspects of your program have been the easiest to keep funded this year? What aspects have been hardest? What avenues have you used to keep your Reading First program funded since entering continuation?
10. What changes, if any, in the implementation of Reading First in 2009-2010 do you envision now?

Overall

11. What have been your school's biggest successes in implementing Reading First this year?
12. What have been your school's biggest challenges in implementing Reading First this year?
13. Is there anything else you think I should know about Reading First at your school this year?

Montana Reading First
2009 State Director Telephone Interview Protocol

Training and Technical Assistance

1. Can you give me an overview of the professional development and technical assistance offered to cohort 1 and cohort 2 Reading First schools this year?
    - Coach and principal training
    - Teacher training (site-based training summer 2008, MT Reading Institute, Knowledge Box, Study Groups, other)
    - Technical assistance and feedback
2. How has this changed from last year? Why?
3. Were there any differences in offerings to cohort 1 and cohort 2?
4. How about district support of their RF schools, to the best of your knowledge, has that changed at all this year? If yes, why?

Implementing Reading First

5. Thinking about any direction you might have given to schools and from your experience working with the schools this year, are there any major changes in the way schools are implementing the following components of RF:
    - School-level Professional Development for Teachers
        - If yes, why?
        - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?
    - Reading Leadership Teams
        - If yes, why?
        - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?
    - Grade-level Meetings
        - If yes, why?
        - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?
    - Assessments (Benchmark and Progress Monitoring)
        - If yes, why?
        - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?
    - Use of Data (Principal, Coach, Teachers)
        - If yes, why?
        - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?
    - Principal Walk-throughs and Feedback
        - If yes, why?
        - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?

- Coaching
    - If yes, why?
    - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?
- Reading Block (90 minutes and Uninterrupted)
    - If yes, why?
    - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?
- Core Program (Fidelity, Lesson Maps, Templates, Replacement Core)
    - If yes, why?
    - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?
- Interventions
    - If yes, why?
    - Are there differences in this area between cohorts 1 and 2?

Sustainability

6. To what extent do you think buy-in to Reading First has changed this year? Why? Are there differences between cohort 1 and cohort 2?

7. How do you envision Reading First being implemented next year?
    - In terms of state-provided professional development and technical assistance
    - In terms of changes in school-level implementation

Other

8. Is there anything else about Montana Reading First this year that you think I should know about?

APPENDIX D

Changes In Reading First Implementation,

2007–2008 to 2008–2009,

Cohorts 1 And 2

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Appendix D

Changes in Reading First Implementation, 2007–2008 and 2008–2009, Cohorts 1 and 2

The majority of principals in cohorts 1 and 2 indicated they had adequate funding for the continued implementation of Reading First during the 2008–2009 school year. Table D-1 summarizes changes in implementation from 2007–2008 to 2008–2009.

Table D-1
Changes in Reading First Implementation from 2007–2008 to 2008–2009, by Cohort

Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Presence of a Reading Coach	
The majority of the Montana Reading First cohort 1 schools (89%) continued as Reading First schools and received reduced funding; two schools opted out of continued participation. Of the 17 schools: • Eleven (65%) maintained a full-time coach • Four (24%) had part-time coaches • Two (12%) had no coach	The majority of the Montana Reading First cohort 2 schools (92%) continued as Reading First schools and received reduced funding; one school opted out of continued participation. Of the 11 schools: • Five (45%) maintained a full-time coach • Six (66%) had part-time coaches
Compared to last year, implementation **remained the same or increased** in the following areas:	
Principal leadership. Most principals continued to regularly observe most teachers' classrooms; while they provided teachers with feedback less frequently than they observed, the frequency by which they did so increased from last year. The majority of principals continued to use results from assessments when communicating with teachers and analyzing schoolwide trends.	***Principal leadership.*** The majority of principals used results from assessments when communicating with teachers and analyzing schoolwide trends; however for some tasks they used data more and for others they used data less.
Staff member buy-in to Reading First. Support for the instructional changes made under Reading First remained the same.	***Staff member buy-in to Reading First***. Support for the instructional changes made under Reading First remained the same.
90-minute reading block. All first-, second-, and third-grade students continued to participate in 90-minute, uninterrupted reading blocks. While almost all of the kindergarten reading blocks were at least 90 minutes, one-fifth of them were interrupted.	***90-minute reading block.*** All first-, second-, and third-grade students continued to participate in 90-minute, uninterrupted reading blocks. While almost all of the kindergarten reading blocks were at least 90 minutes, about two-thirds of them were interrupted.

Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Compared to last year, implementation **remained the same or increased** in the following areas:	
Progress monitoring. All, or nearly all, K-3 students, continued to receive regular progress monitoring.	***Progress monitoring***. All, or nearly all, K-3 students, continued to receive regular progress monitoring. Most interviewed staff members indicated that no changes were made to the way in which they administer assessments, except that in some cases teachers are doing more than they did in the past.
Core program. Nearly all of the teachers indicated using their core program at least as much, if not more, than the previous year and fidelity remained the same, if not stricter. About two-thirds of teachers continued to be satisfied with the core program.	***Core program.*** Nearly all of the teachers indicated using their core program at least as much, if not more, than the previous year and fidelity remained the same. This was generally confirmed in telephone interviews; some schools adopted a replacement core. About three-quarters of teachers continued to be satisfied with the core program.
Grade-level meetings. Almost all teachers continued to report that they attended grade-level meetings; and, this year, larger proportions reported attending them at least two to three times a month. About two-thirds of teachers continued to believe grade-level meetings were useful.	***District support***. The majority of principals continued to agree that their district supported the continuation of Reading First and that no district program's clashed with it. This was supported in interviews with principals.
Teachers' use of data. A larger proportion of teachers reported at least weekly use of data, about half of all teachers did Data use in all other areas (grouping students, identifying students for interventions, communicating with colleagues, and looking at school-wide trends) remained similar to last year.	***Benchmark assessments***. All schools continued to administer the DIBELS three times a year and equal proportions of teachers agreed that systems for administering assessments and analyzing and sharing data were present. Coaches remained confident that DIBELS administration teams understood the administration and scoring of the assessment. Most interviewed staff members indicated that no changes were made to the way in which they administer assessments.

Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Compared to last year, implementation **remained the same or increased** in the following areas:	
Interventions. Overall, coaches reported serving slightly more total students in interventions this year; more received intensive interventions, but less received less-intensive interventions. Five hundred and eighty five (585) received at least 12 hours of interventions, compared to 460 last year[4]. In addition, 730 students received interventions of less duration; the number was reported as 794 last year. The majority of coaches and teachers were positive about the number of students served and the training of intervention providers.	***RLT meetings***. Similar proportions of schools had Reading Leadership Teams which were more likely to meet monthly compared to last year. About two-thirds of teachers continued to believe their RLT was visible and effective. Interview data suggested that some RLTs grew to include additional grades, that new RLTs were established, and that some met less frequently.
Coaching. In schools with coaches, larger proportions of teachers (over three-quarters) reported receiving at least monthly observations and at least monthly feedback (at least three-fifths) from their coach. To some extent, coaches confirmed these reports; this year they reported spending 25 percent of their time providing observations, demonstrations, feedback to individual K-3 teachers compared to 17 percent of their time last year.	
Compared to last year, implementation showed **slight decreases** in the following areas:	
District support. The majority of principals continued to agree that their district supported the continuation of Reading First and that no district program's clashed with it.	***Grade-level meetings***. Almost all teachers continued to report that they attended grade-level meetings; but a large minority did so with less frequency than last year; some interviewed staff members indicated that the frequency of grade-level meetings declined. About three-quarters of teachers continued to believe grade-level meetings were useful.
Benchmark assessments. Most schools continued to administer the DIBELS three times a year; and almost all teachers and principals agreed that their administration systems were present and organized. Coaches remained confident that DIBELS administration teams understood the administration and scoring of the assessment.	***Teachers' use of data***. Similar proportions of teachers reported at least weekly use of data, about two-fifths of all teachers did. Data use was higher in some areas (communicating with colleagues and identifying students for interventions) and lower in others (grouping students and looking at schoolwide trends). However, interviewed staff members did not indicate using data less than last year.

[4] Number of students served is for the 15 schools who answered these questions both years.

Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Compared to last year, implementation showed **slight decreases** in the following areas:	
RLT meetings. All schools had Reading Leadership Teams, however they met less frequently than last year. About two-thirds of teachers continued to believe their RLT was visible and effective.	
Professional development for teachers. A large minority of teachers continued to report a decline the amount of professional development in reading; however, their perceptions of its quality remained about the same as last year. Similar percentages of teachers believed professional development was sustained and intensive and/or focused on what happened in the classroom in both years.	
Compared to last year, implementation showed **more substantial decreases** in the following areas**:**	
	Instructional leadership. Most principals conducted classroom observations; although only about three-fifths of teachers reported their occurrence at least monthly and only one-quarter reported receiving feedback. This decrease was confirmed by coaches and teachers who participated in telephone interviews.
	Professional development for teachers. Almost half of all teachers reported a decline in the amount of professional development they received in reading and smaller proportions felt it was ongoing, sustained, and focused on what happens in the classroom. The majority of principals and coaches agreed there was less professional development this year and that study groups were not implemented and Knowledge Box was used sporadically. However, many interviewed teachers felt they had received the same amount of professional development. Survey data indicated the majority of teachers thought the quality of professional development remained about the same as last year.

Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Compared to last year, implementation showed **more substantial decreases** in the following areas**:**	
	Interventions. Overall, coaches reported serving fewer total students in interventions this year; 574 students received at least 12 hours of interventions, compared to 653 last year[5] and 232 students received interventions of less duration compared to 289 last year. The majority of coaches and teachers were positive about the number of students served and the training of intervention providers. Few interviewed staff members felt that their provision of interventions changed this year. Some noted that the number of intervention providers decreased, but in some cases the same number of students were being served for a shorter period of time.
	Coaching. In schools with coaches, smaller proportions of teachers (about three-quarters) reported receiving at least monthly observations and feedback (about three-quarters) from their coach. Interview data suggest that time coaching has decreased as coaches' hours were reduced or their responsibilities were expanded; many teachers indicated their coach helps them when requested. Coaches reported in surveys spending a similar amount of time devoted to observing, demonstrating and providing feedback to K-3 teachers in 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 (about 20% of their time).

[5] Number of students served is for the 11 schools who answered these questions both years.

APPENDIX E

Third-Grade-Students in the Proficient and Advanced Categories on the CRT, Title 1 and Cohorts 1 and 2

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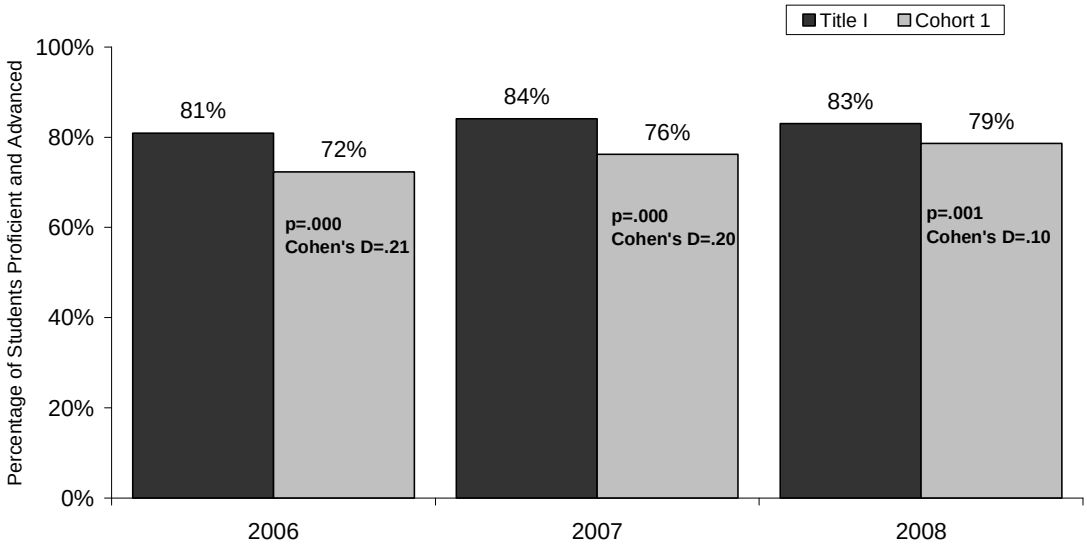
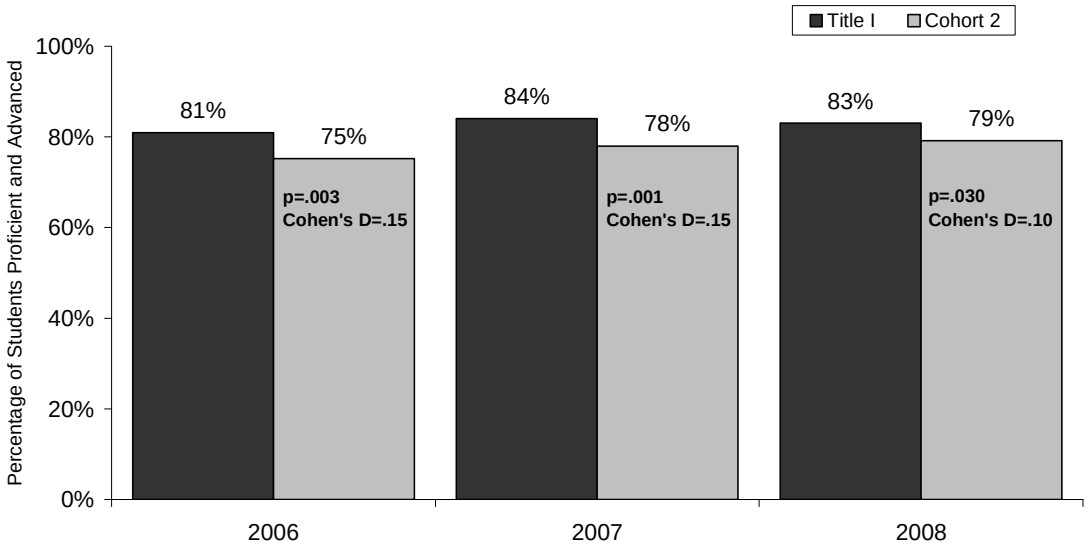
Figure E-1



Third-Grade Students in the Proficient and Advanced Categories on the CRT—Title 1 and Cohort 1

Figure E-2



Third-Grade Students in the Proficient and Advanced Categories on the CRT—Title 1 and Cohort 2

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